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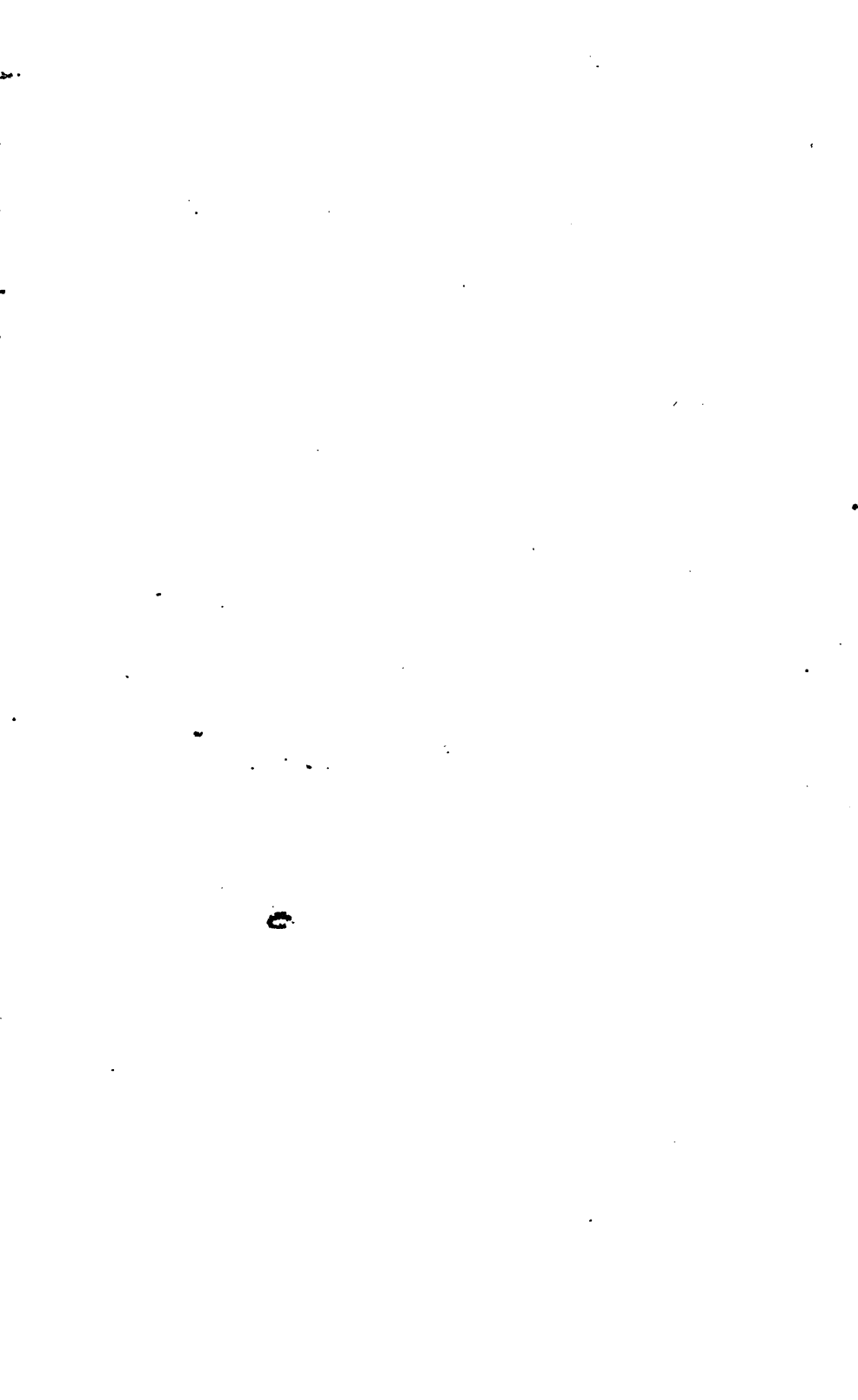
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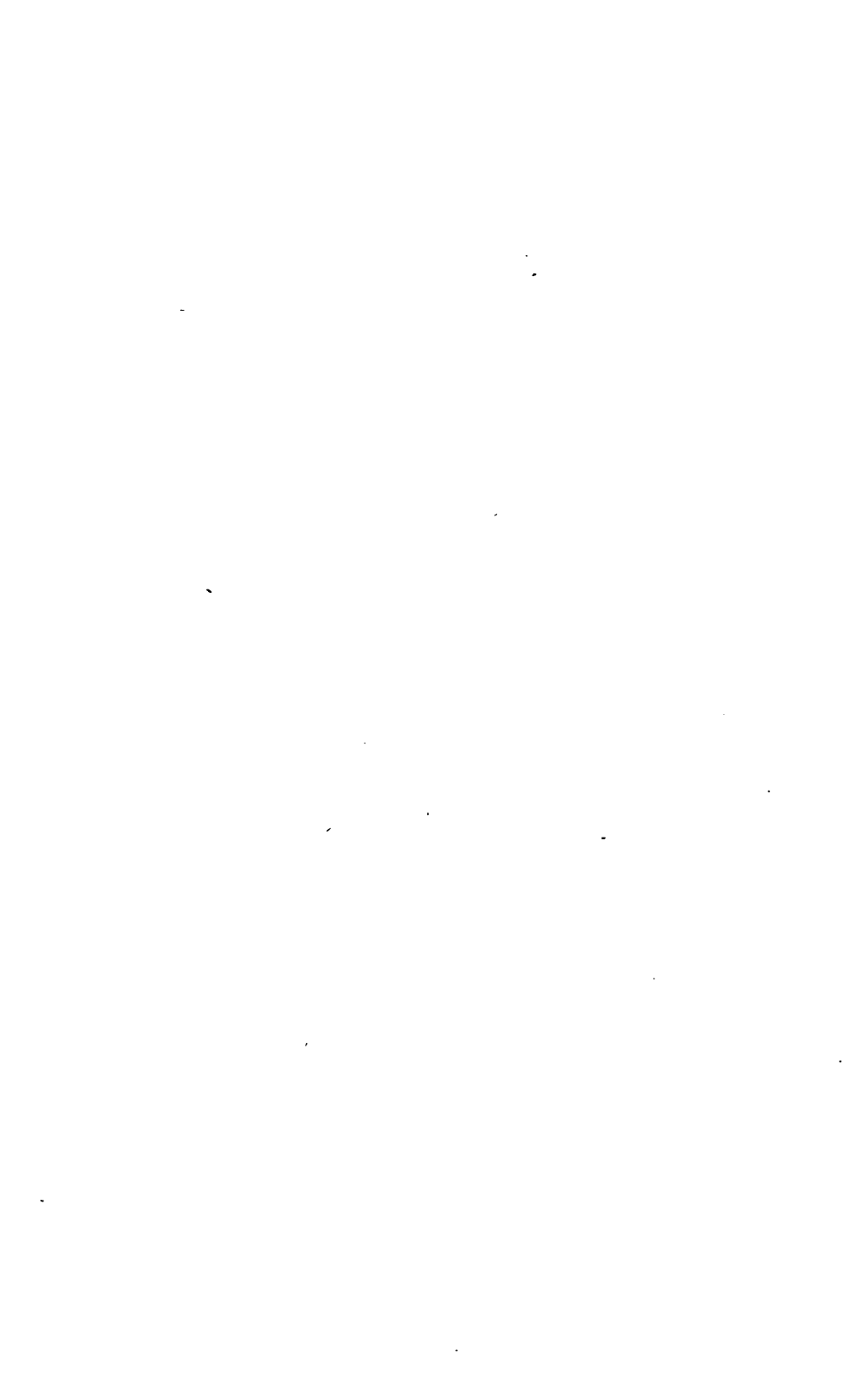
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LIFE AND CORRESPONDENCE

OF THE

EARL OF ST. VINCENT.

VOL. II.





LIFE AND CORRESPONDENCE
OF
JOHN, EARL OF ST. VINCENT,
G. C. B.,
ADMIRAL OF THE FLEET,
&c. &c. &c.

BY
EDWARD PELHAM BRENTON,
CAPTAIN IN HER MAJESTY'S NAVY,
AUTHOR OF THE "NAVAL HISTORY OF GREAT BRITAIN," ETC.

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touching Buonaparte, Trowbridge, Ball, and, finally, of Nelson and General Stuart. I flatter myself that the latter arrived at Messina in time to save that important port, and I am sure every thing that what mortal can do will be achieved by Trowbridge and Ball. Two good regiments of British infantry would have put the last named in possession of Malta long ago*.

Frederick has come on shore for the benefit of his health, and appears to me in a galloping consumption. He wants to go to Cintra for the summer, and spurns at the advice of his medical attendants, who are of opinion he ought to go to England.

You have given no opinion, public or private, or rather no answer, to my interrogatory whether I am to take my passage to England in the *Ville de Paris*, or to go like a convict as I came out†. I do not like to stir the question in a public letter, unless you feel yourself incompetent to give the answer, as matters now stand.

The Queen Charlotte will be better here than on home service, for she has been the root of all the evil you have been disturbed with. Yet it would have been better if she and the London had not served in the same squadron; not that I have a doubt of keeping them both in order, especially if Lord Keith removes to the Charlotte.

Your very sincere,

ST. VINCENT.

* On the subject of these two regiments being denied to the repeated instances of Nelson, Trowbridge, and Ball, we have enough in Clarke and M'Arthur to convince us that something was wrong at Minorea; either that General Fox would not answer for the safety of his command if that force was abstracted, or that he was very obstinate and ill-disposed towards the naval part of the service in the Mediterranean.

† His lordship, it will be remembered, went out in the *Lively*, a frigate of 32 guns, and he returned home in July, in the *Argo*, a ship of 44 guns, as it was not possible to spare the *Ville de Paris* from the station at that time.

To Earl Spencer.

Gibraltar, 27th April, 1799.

My Lord,

I have the honour to enclose extracts of letters lately received from Rear-Admiral Lord Nelson, Sir John Acton, and Captain Trowbridge, and copies of the orders the former has found it necessary to give Sir Sydney Smith—who commenced his command before Alexandria by counter-acting the system laid down by his lordship, and which always appeared to me fraught with the most consummate wisdom; and, as it is evident from the instructions which Buonaparte gave to Consul Beauchamp, copies of which are also enclosed, that he and his army are in the most perilous situation, every means should be used.

I sincerely lament that the destruction of the ships of war and transports in the ports of Alexandria was found impracticable. Having pointed out to Lord Nelson the propriety of Sir Sydney Smith commanding where a Turkish squadron was likely to be employed, his lordship has very judiciously withdrawn Captain Trowbridge, and appointed him to command the blockade of Naples. My only apprehension is that Sir Sydney Smith, enveloped in the importance of his ambassadorial character, will not attend to the practical part of his military profession. I have the more dread of this, because I know *Le Tigre* to be in a woeful state of discipline, which will probably produce sickness and all its concomitant evils.

A very fine Spanish corvette, called *El Vencejo*, captured by the *Cormorant*, I have directed to be surveyed and estimated for his Majesty's service, and I have in contemplation to appoint Lieutenant Dalrymple (lately recommended by your lordship) to the command of her. And when Admiral Duckworth can get timber to finish the corvette on the stocks at Mahon, I will appoint his first lieutenant (Buchanan) acting captain of the *Leviathan*, until Captain Hay joins: she is to be named the *Minorca*.

The complaint Commissioner Coffin labours under will not admit of his passing the summer in this climate, and I expect to see him every hour on his way to England, in hopes of being appointed to Halifax yard.

The Spaniards certainly meditate an attempt to recover Minorca, and the French admiral La Crosse is said to have denounced Don Joseph de Mazaraedo, and demanded that every thing in Cadiz shall be put in requisition for the equipment of the Spanish fleet. The latter I very much doubt the truth of. Captain Webley* is charged with my despatches, and those of Sir William Hamilton, and Sir John Acton. Having frequently pointed out his merits to your lordship, I shall only add that he is a most accomplished officer, and I cannot receive a greater gratification than having him under my command in a good sloop. Your lordship may rely on his report of the operations before Alexandria, and you will soon discover that he merits all I have written upon his subject.

I have the honour, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

Of the history and adventures of Consul Beauchamp, named in the above letter, I make the following extract from Clarke and M'Arthur, p. 539.

"On the 14th February, 1799, says Trowbridge, I detained the caravalla that had at last been permitted to leave Alexandria, and having received information from a spy on board of her, sent for the captain, and showed him a firman from the Grand Signor, taking care not to let him read it. I told him it was a

* The late Rear-Admiral William Henry Webley Parry. The latter name he took long after the date of this letter.

hattesherriff for the head of a traitor. On this he appeared alarmed, and acknowledged he had a Monsieur Beauchamp on board, habited like a Turk, and a French pilot. I immediately sent and seized the ambassador, as they called him, and, by sharpening an axe, and playing him off with the hattesherriff, I so alarmed the Greek domestic, that he showed us where they had concealed their instructions from Buonaparte, on board the caravalla. It appeared to me that the Grand Signor would do this fellow more justice than we could. I therefore sent him in the Swiftsure to Rhodes, *recommending him strongly for decapitation.*"

We are taught to treat our friends as if they would one day become our enemies: why not adopt the converse of the proposition, and treat our enemies as if they might one day become our friends? Are we Christians in name only, and not in fact?

There seems to have been something in the treatment of this poor man which requires explanation. I cannot discover what crime he had been guilty of, to deserve "decapitation." If Mons. Beauchamp had not committed any other offence against the grand Signor or Great Britain than the simple act of following and obeying the orders of his superiors, his treatment appears to me to have been harsh and unmerited. If, on the other hand, he had been

guilty of any treasonable act, the way was to have brought his conduct before a legal and temperate tribunal; not to send him to Rhodes, with a recommendation to have his head cut off by a despot, who would have given himself no sort of trouble to ascertain the merits of the case, but would have been too ready to take the word of a British officer for the sanction of his proceedings. I have not heard that M. Beauchamp did undergo this cruel sentence; but surely this is not the proper mode of treating prisoners of war among civilized nations.

What the nature of the precise instructions were which M. Beauchamp received from Bonaparte, we are left in ignorance. I therefore allude to the circumstance, chiefly with a view to afford the means of clearing a British officer from the imputation of having wantonly sported with the life or the feelings of a fellow-creature, in such a manner as might have led to the most dreadful acts of retaliation, and might even have been used in justification of the massacre of the Turkish prisoners at Jaffa. We are bound to come to the conclusion, that some important document, explanatory of the real facts, has been lost; for I feel as certain, that Trowbridge would not have done a cruel or an unmanly act, as that Lord St. Vincent would not have sanctioned it. Such treatment of a prisoner, on our part, would have been full as

•

unjustifiable as that of Captain Wright by Napoleon. We may, however, safely say, that M. Beauchamp escaped from the axe of the Grand Signor; for, if he had not, Europe would have resounded with the violation of the laws of nations and of nature.

To Lord Nelson.

Gibraltar, 28th April, 1799.

My dear Lord,

By the great liberality of General O'Hara's character, and the kind attention he pays to every requisition I make, all the sea-service mortars in the garrison, with a proportion of shells and powder to load them with, are at this instant embarking, although I did not receive your lordship's letter until the night of the 26th. The gunners' stores for the Culloden, Zealous, and Lion, will go up in the same transport which carries the shells, and a few small sails; the other parts of the boatswains', carpenters', and pursers' demands, must be supplied at Port Mahon, where a ship at a time had best go to complete provisions, stores, and marine clothing. Pray take care that the gunners' stores are given to the specific ships they are demanded for, or there will otherwise be great confusion in the store-keeper's accounts, and loss to the public. I feel this precaution the more necessary, as it may be long before the Lion joins you.

* * * * *

I am not well, and have great cause of dissatisfaction from higher quarters. He has no authority whatever to wear a distinguishing pendant, unless you authorize him, for I certainly shall not. Your lordship will therefore exercise your discretion on the subject, and every other within the limits of your command.

I have sent a copy of the orders you judged expedient to

give Sir Sydney Smith (which I highly approve) to Lord Spencer, with my remarks ; for I foresee both you and I shall be drawn into a *tracasserie* about this gentleman, who, having the ear of ministers, and telling his story better than we can, will be more attended to.

The Charon, after delivering her cargo at Constantinople, will be ordered to join you. I never before saw Captain Mackellar, but he is highly spoken of as a gallant and intrepid officer : he certainly has very much the mien of one. The ordnance storeship which accompanied him is very leaky, and must be caulked before she can proceed ; and I hope the governor will replace the arms, ammunition, and tools, which she threw overboard in a gale of wind on the 14th and 15th instant ; so that it will take a few days to get her ready for sea. In the mean while the mortars, shells, and powder, for your department, will be shipped.

We have strong reports of signal advantages gained by the Archduke Charles over Jourdain, which appear to deserve a greater degree of credit, because the Spaniards have prohibited all communication with the garrison upon pain of death. A French admiral, La Crosse, with a suite of French officers, is at Cadiz, to inspect the Spanish fleet ; and there is a story of his having denounced Mazaraedo, and put every man and thing that can be useful on board the fleet in requisition. In any event, it is absolutely necessary that the Minotaur should join me as soon as possible ; for our inferiority is too great.

Most affectionately your's,

ST. VINCENT.

To Lord Nelson.

Gibraltar, 30th April, 1799.

My dear Lord,

Since my last, by the Penelope cutter, I have judged it necessary to direct Captain Mackellar to bring the trade from Smyrna, and other parts of the Levant, di-

rectly hither, without touching at Palermo ; so that you will not have the services of the Charon. In truth, the squadron before Cadiz is miserably starved, both in frigates and ships of the line. Of the former, Lord Keith has not one ; yet I do not learn that it is in the contemplation of Lord Spencer to give us any addition, Captain Peard being ordered back to England in the Success.

I conclude the French frigates and convoy you received intelligence of being at Trepani are intended for Malta. It does not appear that Egypt is without any article necessary for the support of an army, unless brandy and wine are required, a quantity of which it will be extremely difficult to throw in, if Sir Sydney Smith does his duty.

I fancy ministers at home disapprove of Sir Sydney Smith's conduct at Constantinople ; for in a confidential letter to me, a remark is made, that our new allies have not much reason to be satisfied with it. The man's head is completely turned with vanity and self-importance. Lady Hamilton has described him admirably, in a letter to me. Lord Spencer is so wrapt up in him, that he cannot avoid expressing displeasure at the statements I have made of his behaviour to us both ; considering all my observations as arising from prejudice. When you can spare a ship of the line, or stout frigate, after the Lion is withdrawn, it will be advisable to give him one ; for, by all I learn from Captain Webley, no reliance whatever can be placed on the Turkish naval force, and he will endeavour to throw the whole blame upon us, in case of miscarriage.

I see the object of Russia, in laying hold of Malta, exactly as you do, and it cannot possibly have escaped our ministers, whose policy I have never understood in their manner of conducting the war ; and my suggestions, though they have all proved just, have not been received as they merited. I therefore am very cautious in offering them, or of becoming familiar in correspondence, though, God knows, I have taken a greater degree of responsibility on

my shoulders, than was ever imposed upon my predecessors in any age or country.

We send you five mortars, with a large proportion of shells, fuzes, and powder, exclusive of supplying the demands of the ships which did not get their share of shot and powder, sent under convoy of the *Santa Dorothea* before, which I conclude was for the most part expended at Malta. We expect a good deal of cordage and canvas by the *Chichester*, and two or three hundred coils of rope (from three and a half downwards) from Lisbon, a fair division of which shall be made between Gibraltar and Minorca; and you may confide in a constant attention to all the wants of your squadron, as far as our means go.

Your's, most truly and affectionately,

ST. VINCENT.

The following letter speaks for itself. The difficulties and anxieties of the commander-in-chief were enough to have overpowered the mind of any man who possessed less of energy and determination than Lord St. Vincent:—

To Earl Spencer.

Gibraltar, 10th May, 1799.

My Lord,

I may say, with my old friend General Wolfe, that I have had a choice of difficulties, very much increased by the want of frigates to obtain intelligence of the movements of the enemy; insomuch that I am under the necessity of diverting the "*Success*" from the service she was ordered on; having literally no other resource; nor do I know when I may be able to part with her. Unless another ship is sent from England to convoy the homeward-bound Oporto trade, much clamour will ensue.

Your lordship will be aware that the moment I quit this

bay, which I hope to do early in the morning, the coast from the Tagus to Gibraltar will have no protection, and this garrison will be exposed to great distress for want of refreshments, until a powerful re-inforcement is sent out to recover the dominion of this district under my command, which I must abandon, in order to effect a junction with the ships of the line stationed about Minorca, before any hostile operation takes place against that island—the more to be apprehended because the Brest squadron is six nights and five days before us. All I can say is, that every means shall be used to preserve it, and to counteract the enterprizes of the enemy wherever they may point. Having no information to guide my steps, nor means to trace the course of the Brest squadron, I must grope my way in the best manner I can.

Your lordship will perceive the difficulty of bringing the two regiments from Lisbon to Gibraltar, which General Cuyler informs me is now their destination. I nevertheless leave orders for the Haarlem, Europa, and Pallas to perform this service when they come down the Mediterranean—hourly expected. The Calcutta and Ulysses being so necessary as store ships, I cannot do without them; for, although I hope to be able to withdraw all the stores and provisions necessary for the defence and sustenance of the garrison from Port Mahon, it is a contingency not safely to be relied upon.

Lord Keith has shown great manhood and ability before Cadiz; his position having been very critical, exposed to a hard gale of wind, blowing directly on the shore, with an enemy of superior force to windward of him, and twenty-two ships of the line in the Bay of Cadiz, ready to profit by any disaster which might have befallen him.

I have the honour, &c.,

ST. VINCENT.

It would appear, by the following letters, that while Lord Keith lay before Cadiz with

sixteen sail of the line, the French fleet had escaped from Brest, and, on the 4th of May, 1799, appeared off Cadiz. Lord Keith weighed, and offered them battle, which they declined, although they had a superior fleet to oppose to him. It was blowing very hard at the time, and the gale increased, when the French admiral, seeing he could not enter the port of Cadiz without bringing on an action, at length gave up the point, bore up, and ran through the Straits for Carthagena; upon which Lord Keith crowded all sail for Gibraltar, where he anchored on the same day.

Here, with all the zeal, vigilance, and assiduity of every officer and man, it took five days before the provisions and water could be put on board, and the ships made ready to follow the enemy. When this was done, Lord St. Vincent, ill as he was, hoisted his flag on board the *Ville de Paris*, and, taking Lord Keith under his orders, made all sail for Cape Dell Mell, where he ascertained that the enemy had anchored in Vado Bay. But, having reason to think that Minorca was their object, he proceeded thither, and, landing himself at Mahon, directed Lord Keith to cruize off the island, the Spaniards having collected a body of troops at Majorca. The French again, however, put to sea from Vado Bay, and reached Carthagena on the 17th of June, where, being joined by the

Spanish fleet under Mazarado, which had taken advantage of Lord Keith's absence and got out of Cadiz, they flew through the Straits, and again reached that port in safety. It was long before Lord Keith gained information of this movement, and it was not until the 22nd of July that he reached Cadiz, the day after the combined fleets had sailed. Stung with anguish at this disappointment, his lordship made all sail for Br est, and, having been joined by Sir Allan Gardner, with seventeen sail of the line, he arrived off that port just six hours after the combined fleets had got in. He then returned with his fleet to Torbay. In the mean while, Lord St. Vincent reached Gibraltar, where he was preparing for his voyage home in the *Argo*, while the whole of the combined fleets were flying before Lord Keith.

By the following letter to Earl Spencer it would seem that Lord Keith had nearly brought the enemy within sight of his fleet, and, had he done so, a tremendous conflict would probably have anticipated the great day of Trafalgar. Napoleon had united the two fleets of France and Spain, by the sailing of the former from Br est, in the month of April. They picked up the Spanish division at Cadiz, then pushed for Carthage, where they were equally successful in getting out the ships from that port. The French Admiral seems, then, to have fulfilled

the utmost letter of his instructions; for Buona-
parte had wisely forbidden him to fight. This
was the finest fleet the enemy ever had at sea,
that of 1782 not excepted, and they had the
good fortune to get safe back to Brest. Had
Napoleon ever seriously thought of invasion,
this was his time; but the fact is, he never
seriously did intend it. If he had, he had only
to have kept his combined fleet ready for sea,
and made an indication of sailing, while the
flotilla from Boulogne, Havre, and the Helder
had embarked the army.

To Earl Spencer.

Le Souverain, Gibraltar, 10th May, 1799.

My Lord,

His Majesty's ship Childers arrived at daylight on
the 4th instant with the enclosed, and I did not lose a mo-
ment in sending off advices of the contents to Rear Admirals
Lord Nelson and Duckworth, and to Captain M'Dougal, of
the Edgar, in Tetuan Bay, with directions to him to apprise
Captain Moore, of the Vesuvius, lying in Tangier Bay, of
the approach of the enemy's fleet, by express from Tetuan;
and I sent directions to Vice Admiral Lord Keith, in the
event of his having an action, or a junction being formed
with the Cadiz fleet without one, to make the best of his
way hither; but, the wind having continued to blow strong
from the south-west, nothing could get through the Gut.

The Cameleon arrived on the 5th, having passed through
the French squadron, eight or nine leagues to the west of
Cape Spartel; and at five o'clock the same evening twenty-
six ships were observed passing through the Straits into

the Mediterranean, nineteen of which, at least, appeared to be of the line. The weather was so hazy, with heavy rain, their force could not be ascertained with precision.

I enclose an extract from the journal of Captain Stiles, by which their lordships will perceive that the French squadron eluded the vigilance of Lord Keith by the darkness of the atmosphere; for the enemy was very near the position his lordship had, on receiving intelligence of his approach, determined to take, when Captain Stiles found himself in such jeopardy that he was forced to escape, through a channel pointed out by Mr. Matra, the Consul General at Morocco, who happened to be at Gibraltar. An express was sent to Tangier, via Tetuan, and a duplicate by Mr. Jackson, master of the *Ville de Paris*, from hence, in an open boat, with orders to Lord Keith to make the best of his way hither. In the mean time, all the stores, wine, and provisions, which could be spared were directed to be shipped on board the *Calcutta* and *Ulysses*, armed transports. On the 6th, the *Cameleon* was despatched to Captain Ball, commanding the blockade of Malta, and to Sir Sydney Smith, at Alexandria, and the *Andertrine*, Portuguese Corvette, to Lord Nelson, at Palermo, with advices of the enemy having entered the Mediterranean; and the *Vesuvius* having arrived in the evening from Tangier, to give an account of what Captain Moore had observed touching the French fleet, she was detached to Minorca with the same advices and instructions to Rear Admiral Duckworth, to hold the ships of the line, under his orders, in constant readiness to join the squadron the moment he received intelligence of its approach, and with directions to keep the *Victuallers* and the *Serapis* store ship ready to proceed to such port as should be pointed out; replacing the stores in the *Serapis*, that in case of a siege the stores and provisions should not fall into the hands of the enemy, which must be the case if Fort St. Philip should be in-

vested, the arsenal not being within its protection. In the evening of the 7th, the *Transfir* arrived with the enclosed reports from Lord Keith, which reflect great honour on his lordship's manner of conducting the squadron; and soon after, the *Success*, Captain Peard, having found it impracticable to work out of the Straits, after landing an officer at Tangier, would have been driven into the Mediterranean, had he not taken shelter in the Bay; for the weather was very tempestuous, and has continued more or less so ever since, which put the life of Mr. Jackson and his boat's crew to great hazard, and compelled him to return, as it did two Gibraltar fishing boats, which had been engaged for the same purpose, and very much retarded the embarkation of provisions and stores on board the *Ulysses*. It being, therefore, impossible to have any communication with Lord Keith through the Gut, and having been informed that Commissioner Coffin (who had returned to this place from Minorca) was appointed commissioner of Halifax yard, I desired him to proceed through Spain to Lisbon, and from thence to England in a packet, (which I requested him to apply to Mr. Walpole for) with instructions to despatch a vessel to Lord Keith from Faro; which he most zealously undertook to perform, and accordingly set off on the morning of the 9th, by means of a passport, obtained by General O'Hara from the Governor of St. Roche. The squadron arrived from before Cadiz this morning at nine o'clock; and the moment the most pressing wants of the ships composing it are supplied, which I trust will be by the dawn of to-morrow, it is my intention to proceed with the utmost despatch, consistently with the preservation of the order of sailing, off Cape Mola, and endeavour to collect the ships of the line, under the orders of Rear-Admiral Duckworth, take a position before the island of Minorca, and act afterwards as events may require.

Whatever ships of war their lordships may judge it necessary to despatch hither in consequence of the whole naval force of France and Spain being in these seas, should have all the stores, of any description, that can be collected at the moment, put on board them, and be victualled for six months, and an additional supply sent afterwards in victuallers, &c., powerfully escorted, to prevent their being intercepted; for the Spaniards will naturally keep a squadron cruising at the entrance of the Straits for this purpose, being very favourable for such an operation, and the coast of Andalusia provided with abundance of vessels adapted to it. Their lordships may rest assured that every nerve will be exerted to counteract the designs of the enemy; in which I rely with the utmost degree of confidence on all the officers, seamen, and marines of the fleet I have the honour to command, the present disposition of which I enclose.

I am, Sir, &c.,
ST. VINCENT.

Lord Keith saw twenty-two sail of the line at anchor in Cadiz Bay last evening at sunset. Not having any frigate with me, I am constrained to keep the Success. The homeward-bound Oporto trade will consequently be without convoy.

The French and Spaniards had certainly not forgotten the severe lesson at the Nile, or they would have made a dash on Sicily or Malta, to have landed troops. Well, indeed, might Lord St. Vincent tremble for the fate of these islands; but the French admiral, not very like our's, seems to have counted all his honours by his escape from, and not by his meeting, his enemy.

To Mr. Nepean.

Ville de Paris, Port Mahon, 18th June, 1799.

Sir,

At a moment so eventful, it is with inexpressible regret I acquaint you, for the information of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, that the rapid decline of my health compels me to avail myself of their lordships conditional permission to return to England; for to continue at this place, without a prospect of being soon able to conduct the fleet at sea, would cramp the operations, and prove very injurious to his majesty's service. I have, therefore, transferred the command to Vice Admiral Lord Keith, with their lordship's secret instructions, and other unexecuted orders relative thereto; and, on the arrival of the detachment from Lord Bridport's fleet, and the necessary orders being given for its conduct in the defence of this island, during the absence of Lord Keith, it is my intention to proceed to Gibraltar, in his Majesty's ship the *Argo*, and to wait there the arrival of the *Ville de Paris*, or *Princess Royal*, to convey me to England.

I am, Sir, your most obedient,

ST. VINCENT.

To Earl Spencer.

Port Mahon, 16th June, 1799.

My Lord,

I am honoured with your lordship's letters of the 4th, 6th, and 15th of May, and feel very sensibly the credit you are pleased to give to my exertions, which unhappily are sapped to the very foundation by such a rapid decline of health, as to bereave me of all power both of body and mind; and perceiving that a longer continuance in the command would be injurious to his Majesty's service, and unjust to Lord Keith, I determined to put him in immediate possession of it, in order to give full scope to his exertions, which I am sure will not disappoint

his most sanguine friends. I gave Captain Grey a dormant appointment of Adjutant General of the fleet, under which he has acted, to a certain degree, so as not to give offence to the senior captain; and Captain Bathurst has continued in the command of the *Ville de Paris*, and will either bring her or the *Princess Royal* down to Gibraltar, when the service permits, to convey me to England, should I recover. In the state I am, Captain Grey is essentially necessary to my comfort, and I hope your Lordship will approve of his accompanying me.

The Brest squadron had such a game to play at Malta and Sicily, that I trembled for the fate of our ships employed there, and for the latter island. Your lordship made a better judgment by fixing their operations to the coast of Genoa.

Than Rear Admiral Whitshed, no officer could have been more acceptable to me; he fully merits the good opinion you have formed of him. Your lordship's recommendation of Lieutenant Richards would have been strictly attended to, had I continued in the command.

I suffer so much in writing, that I must close by requesting your lordship will excuse the incorrectness of this letter, and assuring you of the respect,

With which, &c.,

ST. VINCENT.

We find, by the foregoing statements, that Lord St. Vincent, knowing the French fleet had passed up the Mediterranean, pursued them in the *Ville de Paris*, with Lord Keith's ships, and reached Port Mahon, in Minorca, which he supposed it was the object of the enemy to gain possession of. But such did not appear to have been the case. On his arrival he found his health declining so much as to incapacitate him for any active employment.

He therefore resigned the command of the fleet, and came down to Gibraltar, and eventually returned to Spithead in the *Argo*.

But, while at Gibraltar, events crowded thick upon him. He received information that the French, after having formed a junction with the Spanish fleet, had gone *up* the Mediterranean. Lord Keith was off Minorca. The *Speedy*, Captain, now Sir Jahleel, Brenton, was hove down in the mole at Gibraltar, with a clean swept hold. She however sailed the next evening, with despatches for Lord Keith, whom she fell in with off Minorca. His lordship had thirty-eight sail of the line with him, and was at that moment in pursuit of the enemy, of whose destination he had heard two days before.

In the "Naval History" I have given a full account of this eventful campaign, and of the narrow escape of the combined fleets from Lord Keith, who followed them up till he saw them all safe into Brest, when he returned with his fleet to Torbay, and found it augmented to the number of fifty-six sail of the line, including the division of Sir Allan Gardner.

I was at that time a lieutenant of the *Agincourt*, and one of the ships in company. We had the flag of Vice-Admiral the Honourable William Waldegrave, the late Lord Radstock, on whom, for a few days, the temporary command devolved. He was on his way out to Newfoundland as governor.

CHAPTER II.

Retrospect of the three great epochs of the life of Lord St. Vincent—

He returns to Spithead from the Mediterranean command—His want of health and repose—Disturbed by Sir John Orde—Lord Bridport resigns the command of the Channel fleet—Lord St. Vincent succeeds him—His arduous duties, and difficulty of his situation—A new mutiny threatened and prevented—Hoists his flag on board the *Ville de Paris*—The gale of the 17th of May, 1800—Loss of the *Trompeuse* and *Railleur*—Observations on that class of vessel—Glamours against Lord St. Vincent in Parliament, supposed to be for selling such craft out of the service—Northern confederacy—Nelson sent out to the Baltic under Sir Hyde Parker—Change of ministry—Catholic question—Conduct and policy of Mr. Pitt.—Lord Spencer—Lord St. Vincent—New anecdotes of Nelson.

We have now traced Lord St. Vincent through the three grand epochs of his life:—First, from his earliest youth to manhood, and to the attainment of the rank of rear-admiral, together with a seat in the House of Commons. We take the second period from the time of his assuming the command of the West India, or rather the Leeward Island station, late in 1793, until his victorious return from thence, after having added Martinique and St. Lucia to the British dominions. His repose on shore, during

the year 1795, was passed in retirement, and, most probably, preparing for his next command; for he knew full well, although the Mediterranean station was occupied by Lord Hood, that he himself would not long be allowed to indulge in the *otium cum dignitate*. At this time he was in the sixtieth year of his age, in the enjoyment of good health, and with a robust frame and sound constitution. Of his talents for a chief command he had afforded ample proofs, and those proofs were acknowledged to be valid even by his enemies, whether private, political, or national. It was, therefore, to have been expected, that on the first vacancy occurring of sufficient importance to require his skill and firmness, he would be called into action. This vacancy was occasioned by the retirement of Lord Hood, towards the conclusion of 1795; and this brings us to the third epoch of the history of this great officer. In the command of the Mediterranean fleet we see him with that vast scope for his genius and activity, which would call into play every energy of his body and mind. The more he was surrounded by difficulty, the more was this energy displayed.

The years 1796-7-8 and 9 were the most important and eventful in the history of Great Britain, or, perhaps, of the world. The whole of Europe seemed convulsed, from one end to the

other, and one decisive battle against us might have converted our allies of to-day into our enemies to-morrow. France and England were the two great belligerent powers, and on the predominance of the one or the other seemed to depend the stability or the overthrow of all that was valuable in the social world.

Under the protection of Divine Providence, the Rock of Gibraltar was at once the emblem of our security and the means of affording relief and protection to the timid and effeminate natives of the South, who looked to us for support. Without this resting place, as an anchorage for our fleet, and a depôt for stores, it is more than doubtful whether we could have resisted, as we did, the torrent of adverse circumstances. Corsica and Elba evacuated in 1796; Minorca not then in our power; Malta under the influence, and, soon after, absolutely in the hands of France, there would have been no rendezvous for a British fleet. In fact, Gibraltar alone was the means of our regaining our hold, and achieving those wonderful victories, by land and sea, on the shores of Egypt, the good effects of which the world is still feeling. Without Gibraltar Sir John Jervis never could have found provisions for his fleet, and for the troops which were serving with him. Even with that invaluable fortress and anchorage his

trials were immense ; without them they would have been quite insurmountable. The difficulty of obtaining supplies from England, at this time, can only be appreciated by those who are conversant with the peculiar nature of the circumstances in which the fleet was placed. Conceive, too, the fate of a nation depending on the change of wind, or the arrival of a convoy of victuallers ! When St. Vincent stood on the fortifications of the Rock, he beheld his transports, loaded with supplies for almost famishing ships, attacked by the Spanish gunboats—vessels of immense power in light or baffling winds. The little brig of war which dispelled these locusts, and saved the convoy, was not, under ordinary circumstances, equal to a contest with one of them.

But St. Vincent knew how to inspire energy as well as to reward it. His eye was upon every part of his command ; he would not allow himself to be deceived by others, or blinded to his own dangers. Taking a broad and comprehensive view of the whole, he directed attention to the minutest part ; and while he provided for the wants of his ships as a seaman, he did not forget the state of the world as a politician. He foresaw the possible hostility of Russia, and therefore husbanded his naval stores, with the utmost frugality. He saw the possibility of the invasion of Ireland, and was doubly guarded

against the machinations of the natives of that country in his fleet. After having defeated an enemy of double his force, he had to encounter the still greater danger of insubordination and treason. These he met like a man and a hero, yet without forgetting the duties of a Christian; and having quenched the rising flame by timely applications, he guarded against any further outbreak, by dividing the duties of his ships and officers, and keeping every one firmly and steadfastly fixed at his post. Hence the bombardment of Cadiz in the summer of 1797, and the expedition to Teneriffe under Nelson; the fruits of which were all that could be desired. They gave the sailors something to do, to expect and to talk about, and diverted their minds from brooding over the mischievous and melancholy events, which in England had nearly subverted the empire.

The reason for Lord St. Vincent resigning the command of the fleet to Lord Keith has been shown. His lordship arrived at Spithead in the *Argo* in the month of August following, and retired for the recovery of his health to his seat at Rochetts. Soon after this, the troublesome affair of Sir John Orde occurred to disturb his domestic comfort, and retard his recovery; and this was the more lamentable since Sir John Orde was not bound, under any rules of honour or propriety, to call Lord St. Vincent to a personal

account for his treatment of him, while under his command, and in the execution of his duty; and Sir John Orde, by his own showing, having declined to accept of the only reparation for his wounded pride, that of re-boisting his flag, had no right or cause to complain of the treatment he received. The king acted with great wisdom in forbidding their meeting under the circumstances.

On the resignation of Lord Bridport, and his final retirement from active service, Lord St. Vincent was appointed to the command of the Channel fleet, a situation by no means enviable at that particular period; the ships being now worn and in want of repair, the crews dissatisfied with the long continuance of the war, and the dull monotony of the blockade, unbroken except very rarely, by any incident of capture, still less of battle; for the enemy had got so wary since the destruction of their fleet at the Nile, that they never showed themselves at sea, unless in such a force as we have just related to have escaped into Brest.

Mean while, there was still lurking in some of the ships the deadly seeds of that mutiny which three years before had so openly shown itself; and I am firmly of opinion that Mr. Pitt and Lord Spencer selected the only officer holding suitable rank, who was equal to cope with the spirit of insubordination which displayed itself

among the united Irishmen on board the *Nep-
tune* and *Pompée*.

It was in his situation as commander-in-chief of the Channel fleet that Lord St. Vincent lost his popularity among the officers of the navy. He saw that there was no way to restore the healthy tone of discipline which had been so long lost, but by keeping the officers firmly to their duty. He therefore would not allow them the indulgence of sleeping on shore, because he could not, consistently with his plans, allow the same to the sailors. And here, I am sorry to say, his lordship found opponents among the higher classes, who ought to have known better, and whose sense of their country's danger should have conquered every selfish feeling. Lord St. Vincent saw the fatal effects of relaxed discipline in the seven preceding years; he saw that severity to the lower classes would have only lost him their esteem, if the officers were not made to feel a large portion of that restraint which it became indispensably necessary to inflict on the sailors.

Never shall I forget the sleepless and anxious night of the 24th February, 1800, which I passed at Spithead. I was at that time first lieutenant of the *Agincourt*, of 64 guns. A considerable fleet was lying there: among others, the *Cæsar* of 80 guns, commanded by my brother, now Sir Jahleel Brenton. From him I learned, as well

as from my own captain, that a general explosion was expected in the night or early in the morning of the 25th, and a renewal of the scenes of April, 1797. Every captain was prepared for it; the officers were all armed, and a serious conflict was expected. The marines we knew we could depend on, and privately and quietly, without making any display of our resources, we prepared ourselves, and waited the event.

The seamen, however, seem to have been made sensible of their perilous condition, and that, even if they succeeded in their attempt, utter ruin must be the consequence, both to themselves and their officers, for whom, generally speaking, they bore a great respect and regard. They saw that the whole country would be against them, and that they must either fly to the enemy, or give themselves up to certain punishment. Whether, therefore, any serious commotion was or was not intended, our preparations were sufficiently known to encourage the loyal, and to repress and subdue the disaffected; and the awful night passed off without any disturbance.

The health of the noble earl being at this period much impaired by long and arduous service, he required temporary retirement, and for a few months he was permitted to enjoy the repose and luxuries of Rochetts, surrounded by

kind friends, neighbours, and a peasantry who quite adored him. But longer than the spring of 1800 he could not be spared from the important duties which devolved on him, as successor to Lord Bridport in the command of the Channel fleet. This important station required the whole of his talents and energies united. His lordship hoisted his flag in his favourite ship the *Ville de Paris*, which having been sent home and properly repaired, was ready to receive him; and he took his station off Ushant, with a hope that the combined fleets, which we have seen in the preceding year escape into Brest, would come out and try their strength with him. But in this he was disappointed, and in the month of May he was driven into Torbay by one of the most tremendous hurricanes I ever remember. It came on during the night of the 16th and 17th, and blew with a violence which was never witnessed by the oldest seaman. The *Ville de Paris* scudded before it, and I am told by those who were on board of her, that her motion was awful. Lord St. Vincent was seated in an arm chair, lashed on one side of the quarter deck, and thence gave his orders. The fleet arrived without much damage in Torbay.*

* This spot, with the wind in the position it then was, (between west and south-west) offered a most friendly and acceptable shelter; but I must again warn my naval readers of the risk they incur of being caught there with an easterly wind, by which, with a convoy, very serious delay and injury to our trade has been experienced.

During this hurricane, two unfortunate sloops of war, the *Trompeuse* and the *Railleur*, were turned bottom up, and all on board perished.

These vessels were of that vile French corvette class, with weak upper works, and flush decks, run up with slight materials, made for sailing mostly in light winds, but never calculated to meet the weather of our climate. They were usually built at Bordeaux, Marlaix, or St. Maloes, on speculation, and a desperate speculation it was. They made, perhaps, two or three captures of some value before they were taken by our active cruisers; in which case the owners were amply repaid. On the other hand, if they were taken soon after they left their port, which was very frequently the case, the loss was divided by insurance among so many shareholders as to be of little importance. We had, during the war, many of these "coffins," as we called them, purchased into the service. They answered only one purpose—which was that of giving promotion to some young officers, who, if they had interest, very soon got removed out of them. The seamen deserted from them on every occasion; but there was generally nearly a whole complement on board to find a watery grave. It was not all the French prizes of this class which were so defective. Those built by the government were generally fine models, such as the *Bonne Citoyen*, the *Suffisante*, the *Vic-*

torieux, the Cormorant, the Andromeda, and many others, which had a long and prosperous run in the service. I am of opinion that the outcry made in the two following years against Lord St. Vincent, for selling a number of vessels (found to be worse than useless) out of the service, must have chiefly alluded to the Trompeuse, Gentile, and Railleur class ; for getting rid of which he deserved the thanks of every seaman. But what did his clamorous opponents in parliament know of these matters ?

The year 1800 was comparatively quiet within the circle of Lord St. Vincent's command, and I know of no incident worth recording which I have not already given in the Naval History. I shall therefore pass on to the following year, in which a change of ministers involved a change in the command of the Channel fleet, and brought Lord St. Vincent to the head of the Admiralty.

Whether the Catholic question was the real or the pretended cause of the breaking up of the Pitt administration, is not quite clear. It is certain, however, that the decided opinion of Mr. Pitt, as to the impolicy of making peace with the Chief Consul, and the then government of France, and his repeated expression of that opinion, formed insuperable obstacles to any attempt at such pacification, notwithstanding the national opinion seemed to be strongly in

favour of the experiment. He therefore made up his mind to retire from the head of affairs; and the Catholic claims, which he espoused, and which the King totally disapproved, were made the ostensible cause of dissolving a ministry, the most powerful for rank, talents, and the period of its having been in office, of any that had ever governed this country.

When the new arrangement came into effect, however, an effort was made to procure a lasting and solid peace. Mr. Addington, afterwards Lord Sidmouth, became prime minister, and Lord St. Vincent first lord of the Admiralty. Lord Grenville retained office. Mr. Tierney, Mr. Wyndham, and many others, joined the new government, and thus formed a mixture of Whigs and Tories, who, in 1802, patched up a peace with France. It soon, however, proved a hollow and a treacherous one on the part of France. Mr. Pitt was right in his predictions, and right in leaving office, in order that the experiment might be tried; and the new government were equally justified in making the experiment, in order that the people of the empire might be convinced that no solid peace could exist, so long as France retained her revolutionary government.

In the mean time, in order to secure that peace, the most vigorous preparations were very properly exerted for prosecuting a future

war, and the Northern Confederacy was made to feel and to submit to the avenging arm of Britain.

The restless and never-ceasing intrigues of France with the Northern Powers, the blandishments of a courtesan (Madame Chevalier), sent by Bonaparte to the Emperor Paul, and numerous other low devices, were used to turn the mind of that maniac autocrat against Great Britain. These succeeded for a time, and plunged us into frightful scenes of foreign warfare; but, by the Divine aid, we were enabled to triumph over this new host of foes. Nelson was again called forth. Fortunately for his country, though unjustly for himself, he was disgusted with the Mediterranean station, where Lord Keith had been placed over him, on the retirement of Lord St. Vincent; and where Sir Sydney Smith had been sent to share his power, perchance to reap some of his laurels. I cannot help thinking too, and am supported in the opinion, that there was a jealousy against Nelson himself. Lord St. Vincent hints, in one of his letters, that his enemies at home supported those who were opposed to him. I am not prepared to prove what may, after all, be only a surmise. Certain, however, it is, that Nelson was sent out to the Baltic with a commander-in-chief over him. But Nelson, when the enemy was in sight, was never eclipsed—he

never permitted any one to stand between him and his glory. The battle of Copenhagen, and its results, are well known; but the following anecdotes of our favourite national hero I have from undoubted living authority; and as I do not believe they were ever published before, I shall not offer any apology for giving them insertion in this work.

Nelson, it will be remembered, was appointed second in command in the Copenhagen expedition, in 1801, Sir Hyde Parker having the command in chief. Sir Hyde Parker was, intellectually speaking, not deficient in any of those qualities which were required in a commander-in-chief; but, at that period, his health and strength were declining, and he was unequal to the charge. Soon after the fleet came to an anchor off the entrance of the Sound, between the castles of Cronenbourg and Helsinbourg, but out of gun-shot from either the Swedes or the Danes, the commander-in-chief received intelligence from the shore, which induced him to pause; conceiving, from the report, that the enemy were lying in eighteen feet water, and that it would be impossible for our ships of the line to approach within sufficient distance to attack them with any reasonable prospect of success. It blew hard, and there was a good deal of sea running, when Nelson received a message from Sir Hyde, signifying, that as he

(the admiral) perceived there was no chance of succeeding in their attack on Copenhagen, he had decided upon returning to England. Nelson determined to wait upon the admiral immediately, and he desired Captain Hardy, of the *St. George*, on board which ship he then was, to have a boat manned for him to go on board the *London*, the commander-in-chief's ship. The captain expressed a doubt of his lordship's being able, with the sea that was running, and his having but one arm, to get into the boat. "But I am determined I will go," said Nelson. "Then," said Hardy, "I must put you into the boat as she lays on the booms, and hoist you out in her." This was accordingly done, with every proper and seaman-like precaution, such as stopping the oars down to the shafts, and hooking the tackles to selvagee strops, which might be instantly cut if they could not be unhooked; and a boat's crew of the very best seamen was chosen. Thus away went Nelson, with the view to obtain the sanction of his superior, to make the attempt with the smallest ships of the line, assisted by the frigates and all the small vessels of the fleet. After much discussion, the permission he so anxiously desired was granted, although Sir Hyde still seemed to think that the attempt would be useless or unsuccessful. Nelson then shifted his flag to the *Elephant*, and proceeded to the

attack. We know the result. Sir Hyde, it is true, did make the signal of recal during the action; but Nelson said he would venture to disobey the order, and he desired that the signal for close action should be kept flying. Whenever Nelson had any conversation of this kind, he always committed it to paper. He did so on this occasion, and I regret I have not the manuscript, which I believe still exists. Here Nelson applied his unerring rule for officers: "When there is a doubt, *fight*, and you are sure to be right."

Having mentioned the above facts, perhaps I may be excused for adding the following details, respecting the well-known anecdote connected with his letter to the Crown Prince. I had these details from living and undoubted authority.

When the fire of the enemy was as severe as our fleets had ever sustained, Nelson said he would write a letter, and went to his cabin for that purpose. The reader, who may be unacquainted with the interior arrangement of a ship of war, is not to suppose that the hero of the Nile went off the deck to do this, or removed in any manner from the scene of death. On the contrary, I believe the cabin in which Nelson was seated to have been the focus or centre of the enemy's target. As soon as he had finished his letter, he sent for Mr. Wallace,

Captain Hardy's clerk, and said to him, "Now, do you go and bring me a candle out of the cockpit, to seal this letter with." I believe it was Wallace who then suggested that a wafer, under such circumstances, might be excusable: "No," said Nelson, "that will not do now—they will think we are afraid." Wallace did as he was desired: he went in search of a lighted candle; but, although in the midst of fire, no lighted candle could be had, for all the fighting was in broad daylight. This would not satisfy Nelson: "Go down," he said, "to the cockpit, and bring me a candle in a lantern; and do you hear," he added, "bring me my large seal, which is put away below." He then described to him where to find it. "A common seal will not do on this occasion." At length the candle and lantern, and seal, were all brought, and reported to Nelson, who, having finished writing, had gone on the poop, and was employed in giving directions, and looking at the effects of his broadsides. Nelson then went down to the cabin, made the clerk fold up the letter with unusual care, sealed it with his own hand, and sent it.

Nelson's pursuit of the French fleet to the West Indies was as bold a step as had ever been taken by any British admiral on his own responsibility. The late Mr. York, who was the first lord of the Admiralty in 1810 and 1811,

told me that the government were very uneasy when they heard of it, as the home and Mediterranean stations were at that time very unguarded. It has already been stated, that, on his arrival among the Carribee islands, he received letters from the governors of Barbadoes and Antigua, informing him that the enemy had gone to Trinidad. "I wish," said Nelson, "I had never received these confounded letters, for they tell me one thing, and I am sure of the other; they say Villeneuve is at Trinidad, and I say he is at St. Kitts; but I must act on their information, and not on my surmises." He accordingly went to Trinidad, and no enemy was there. He then ran down to St. Kitts, and found that the enemy had been there at the very time he had predicted, and where he would have found them had he gone. He then steered for Grenada, and there his lookouts made the signal for a fleet—"an enemy." "It is not them," said Nelson; "I am sure it is not them; but if it is, we must fight them; so make the signal to prepare for battle." It turned out, not to be them, but a convoy of British merchant vessels. Nelson had no wish, with his then limited number of ten sail of the line, to meet the enemy's fleet; still he would have fought them if he had come up with them.

Nelson had now so constantly, by night as

well as by day, revolved in his great mind every possible device and intention of his fugitive enemy; that at last he wrote his orders for young Bettesworth, of the *Curieux*—"Here, sir," said he; "are your orders. You will find you are to steer such a course. You will out-sail the enemy, and in so many days you will fall in with him in such a bearing. You are then to return to me by the very opposite track, and you will find me in such a latitude and longitude."

Bettesworth shoved off in his boat. "Now," said Nelson, "I shall never see that young man any more;—he will fall in with the enemy just as I have told him; but, instead of returning to me, he will go at once to England with the news. I don't care about him," added Nelson, "but I read it in his countenance that he will not come back to me."

The events both turned out exactly as he had predicted. Bettesworth did fall in with *Ville-neuve* in the spot indicated by Nelson, and, instead of returning to him as he had been directed, went home to give an account of his adventure. Bettesworth was a very fine gallant fellow, and would have cut a figure in our service had he lived; but this was an act of disobedience which might have subjected him to the rebuke of a court-martial; though it is remarkable that he got his promotion to the

rank of post-captain, for his assiduity in bringing home this account of Villeneuve. In by-gone times Nelson's extraordinary foresight would have been deemed the effects of supernatural agency, or intercourse with evil spirits.

When Nelson joined Collingwood, off Cape St. Vincent, he was extremely cautious to prevent the enemy knowing what number of line of battle of ships he had with him. For this reason, while he sent six sail off to Gibraltar for water and stores, he detached six more to the westward of him, barely keeping him in sight of signals, while he, with nineteen sail of the line, kept off from the land, within sight of the Mars, which ship was stationed to hold communication with the frigates off Cadix, under Blackwood, who was directed to make known by signal all the enemy's movements. "Now," said Nelson to Hardy, "when you see a felucca coming out from the land, and running down to the fleet, don't take any notice of her—let her do as she pleases."

Soon after out came the felucca, looked at the fleet, reconnoitred, and counted nineteen sail of the line, and went away.

"That will do," said Nelson, "we shall have them out now. Villeneuve is in that vessel, and he has come to look at us; and, now he thinks we have only twenty sail of the line (including the Mars), he will come out, and fight us. I al-

ways said the fleet would leave Cadiz on the 20th of October, that the Mars would make the signal for them at nine o'clock, and that the battle would be fought on the 21st. That is my great day — it is our famous day at Burnham Thorpe. “You may laugh,” he said to my informant, “but so it will be; and I tell you, moreover, that we shall get twenty sail of the line from them.” Villeneuve was in the felucca, as it afterwards appeared, and was deceived by the stratagem, supposing Nelson had only twenty sail of the line.

On the 20th, a little before nine o'clock A. M., Nelson was on deck, and asked Mr. Pasco*, the signal lieutenant, whether the Mars had not got the signal flying for the enemy coming out of harbour. “No, my lord,” said Pasco, who held the glass to his eye, looking steadily at the Mars. “I say, yes,” said Nelson, looking at the Mars through the bent fingers of his left hand. “No, my lord, the Mars has no signal up,” said Pasco again. “What! you don’t believe me then,” said Nelson; “well, then, in half a minute you will hear the gun, and see the smoke;” and, as he spoke, the report of the gun reached them, and, on looking with more rigid scrutiny (for all eyes were now turned upon the Mars), the signal was seen flying, which Nelson had fore-

* The present Captain John Pasco.

told. With the rest of the story my readers are acquainted. The battle was fought on the 21st; Nelson fell; and nineteen, if not twenty, sail of the line were taken or destroyed.

It is much to be regretted that the last interview between his late majesty King George III. and his immortal admiral was any thing but satisfactory to the latter. I have it from undoubted authority that George III. did not exchange a word with Nelson at the levee at Buckingham house, after the affair of Boulogne. Whether it was the death of Carracioli, or the conduct of Nelson in regard to Lady Hamilton, which had displeased his Majesty, it is now not easy to decide; but the fact is certain. The king wished to have seen him, and sent a message to him to that effect just before Nelson sailed from England to take the command of the fleet off Cadiz; but the letter never reached him till he arrived on the last scene of his earthly glory.

CHAPTER III.

Lord St. Vincent in the House of Lords—Letters—To Sir John Carter — To Mr. Pipon — To Mrs. — — To Sir James Haslyu — To Lady E. Fane — To the Duke of Northumberland — To Commissioner Fanshawe — To the Duke of Grafton — To F. Honeygood, Esq. — To Lady D. — To the Hon. Thomas Erskine — To the Duke of Northumberland — To the Duchess of Gordon — To Mrs. Boscawen — To Thomas Parly, Esq. — To Sir Charles Grey — To John Robinson, Esq. — To Mrs. Montagu — To Sir Charles Grey — To Commissioner Fanshawe — To Sir Charles Grey — To Commissioner C. — To A. M'Donald, Esq. — To Commissioner Fanshawe — To the Duchess of Athol — To the Marquis of Huntley.

I now recur, with great satisfaction, to Lord St. Vincent's own letters, feeling, as I do, that whenever circumstances permit, they are the most efficient medium I can use as a record and illustration of his public career, no less than of his personal character. Several of those which follow in the present chapter will afford an eloquent and unanswerable proof of the unswerving firmness and the strict integrity with which he administered the all-important office to which he was now called, as first lord of the Admiralty, at a time like that now to come under consideration; for I cannot but think that the

office in question was, at that period, even paramount in importance over that of the premiership itself.

Previously, however, to recommencing the correspondence of Lord St. Vincent as first lord of the Admiralty, it may be proper to add that I find him, on Thursday, April 16, 1801, for the first time in his place in the House of Lords, in that new and excellent capacity. On this occasion he moved a vote of thanks to the commander-in-chief, the officers, seamen, &c., who were engaged in the memorable affair of destroying the Danish fleet at Copenhagen. After eulogising, in the highest terms, the conduct of all parties engaged in that affair, he proceeded to say that it was an engagement which surpassed any achievement of the British arms at sea, not only during the glorious series of maritime successes which had distinguished the present war, but perhaps in any former period of our naval annals.

On the 30th of October, 1801, I again find him in the House of Lords, moving their Lordships thanks to Rear-Admiral Sir James Saumarez, for his noble and gallant exploits in the Bay of Gibraltar, and off the Straits, on the 12th July.

In the debate on the merits of the preliminaries of peace, on the 3d of November following, when the address was moved by Lord

Remsey and seconded by Lord Liverpool, Lord Spencer, who had then recently been succeeded by Earl St. Vincent as first lord of the Admiralty, attacked the policy of the treaty entered into with the chief consul of France, which he said was attended with circumstances of humiliation and disgrace. These expressions called up Lord St. Vincent, who noticed them in a very forcible, but at the same time in a very mild and statesmanlike manner. He denied that any thing like either disgrace or humiliation attached to the treaty. He said the terms were equally honourable and advantageous to Great Britain; and the share which he had the honour to have had in advising their being acceded to, he should ever consider as the pride of his life. We had obtained two of the most valuable islands in the whole world, whether considered in a political or commercial point of view—Ceylon and Trinidad. On this occasion, Lord Nelson spoke to the same effect.

We now recur to the correspondence.

To Sir John Carter, Mayor of Portsmouth.

17th February, 1801.

My dear Sir,

In accepting the laborious employment imposed upon me, I reckon very much upon the vigour with which you have conducted the police of Portsmouth, and you may rely upon every support and assistance in my power.

The circumstances of the war, and numerous connexions

of the S——r family, have contributed to swell the list of post-captains and commanders to an enormous size, inso-much that I have determined not to promote to those ranks except in cases of extraordinary merit and services, until the worthy on half pay are provided for; but I am open to your recommendations of good men to fill employments below those ranks.

Your's most sincerely,
ST. VINCENT.*

To — Papon, Esq., Chief Justice of Jersey.

February 19, 1801.

Sir,

I shall seek merit, and reward it, to the utmost of my power, in every branch of the navy, civil and military; but at present I am restrained from promoting, by the very great number of meritorious officers on the list of post-captains and commanders, now, and for a great length of time, unemployed; and it is my fixed determination not to attend to any recommendation whatsoever, except on occasion of brilliant services against the enemy, until they are provided for.

Very much your humble servant,
ST. VINCENT.

To —.

19th February, 1801.

My dear Madam,

I am not over-pleased with your letter; for, after the solid proofs I have given of my attachment to your family, you ought not to have doubted my good intentions

* Sir John Carter, the mayor of Portsmouth, to whom the above letter is addressed, was one of the most active, efficient, and upright magistrates that ever adorned the bench. He was the father of the present member for that borough, Mr. John Benham Carter, and father-in-law to the present Vice-Admiral Giffard.

in favour of your husband and son. There is also much due to many other friends. I will make neither professions nor promises : let my deeds show.

Very much your humble servant,
ST. VINCENT.

To Sir James Hamlyn, Bart.

Admiralty, 22d February, 1801.

Sir,

I do assure you I shall always be ready to attend to your wishes. In the present instance it is not in my power to do what you desire, for, on my coming into this office, I proposed to the Board not to make any promotion, unless on account of brilliant services performed in arms, until the numerous list of meritorious post-captains and commanders on half-pay should be brought into a narrow compass by employing them as vacancies may occur.

I remember with pleasure our meeting at Saltram, and have often mentioned it to our worthy friend John Lloyd, and beg you will believe me to be, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

To Lady E. Fane.

Admiralty, 22d February, 1801.

My dear Madam,

I must entreat of you to turn the back of your hand to all applications for promotion to any rank higher than a lieutenant; the lamentable profusion of preferment having saddled me with at least fifty meritorious post-captains, and as many commanders, on half-pay; and, until they are provided for, I will not listen to any recommendation whatsoever. I will take care of young Connelly, and have the honour to be your obedient,

Affectionate kinsman,

ST. VINCENT.

To the Duke of Northumberland.

Admiralty, 25th February, 1801.

A thousand thanks to your grace for the interest you take in my appointment to the Board, where I hope to be of some use in stopping, if not radically reforming, the flagrant abuses which prevade the naval service, both civil and military.

Believe me to be,
Your Grace's very faithful and
obedient servant,
ST. VINCENT.

To Commissioner Fanshawe.

Admiralty, 25th February, 1801.

My dear Sir,

Many thanks for your well judged letter. We are both actuated by the same principle, and I flatter myself, if I have a reasonable tenure of my present situation, I shall be able to correct some of the gross abuses which clog the wheels of the service, and which, if permitted to go on much longer, must swallow up all the means of the country.

Your's most truly,
ST. VINCENT.

The patriotic reader will lament with me, in reference to the above letter, that his lordship had *not* a reasonable tenure of his office. Had he not been prematurely removed from it, many abuses and flagrant acts of injustice would have been done away with or atoned for.

To the Duke of Grafton.

Admiralty, 26th February, 1801.

My Lord Duke,

I will give Lord Augustus Fitzroy a larger and sounder frigate than l'Oiseau as soon as I can, and I propose to send the lieutenant to Lord Hugh Seymour, for that promotion which I cannot give at home. The confidence which your grace reposes in my zeal and assiduity is well founded; but I have seen so many good and gallant admirals make a very contemptible figure at this Board, that I do not feel so bold on the score of abilities as my friends are disposed to be. The Board is well composed, and there is a very able man at the head of the Navy Office.* In the choice of Admiral Cornwallis to command the Channel fleet, I am countenanced by the universal opinion of the profession, so that I set out well, and shall be happy at all times to receive your commands. I have the honour to be, with the truest respect,

Your grace's most obedient, humble servant,

ST. VINCENT.

To Filmer Honeygood, Esq.

February 26th, 1801.

My dear Sir,

I thank you for your obliging letter; and I will endeavour, by the exertion of all my faculties, to eradicate the numberless abuses which have crept into every department of the navy, civil and military, and to prove myself a faithful servant to the public, and

Your very sincere and obedient servant,

ST. VINCENT.

The following letter relates to the son of the

* Sir Andrew Hammond, Bart.

party addressed, who had been guilty of a breach of discipline, and dismissed the service.

To Lady D——

March 7th, 1801.

Madam,

The moment I received your ladyship's letter (which, from being addressed to me in Torbay, was much delayed in its progress) I made inquiry into the measures which had been taken, upon the different applications for the remission of the sentence of the court-martial. Among others, I found a very strong one from Mr. Dundas; and the result is that the late Board was convinced of Mr. ——— having been afflicted with insanity some years ago, but no instance of the disorder appeared at the time he was tried, nor was he supposed in a state of insanity when he committed the offence for which he was brought to trial; and upon these grounds the Board did not think proper to do more than remit the two years' confinement in the Marshalsea. Whether any thing further can be done in alleviation of your ladyship's distressed feeling, is a matter requiring much and deep consideration; but I beg leave to assure you that a virtuous widow, struggling with the difficulties of providing for a numerous family, has always attracted my admiration, and I have greatly to lament that the *deplorable state** of the discipline of the navy should be such a bar to the laudable pursuits your ladyship is engaged in.

I have the honour to be,

With great respect and esteem,

Your ladyship's obedient, humble servant,

ST. VINCENT.

* Deplorable, indeed, was the state of discipline at that time, but it was full as much owing to the captains and admirals as it was to the lieutenants and midshipmen. Perhaps the former should have kept more on board of their ships, and set a better example.

The following letter exposes the infamous and unjustifiable traffic between the American consuls and our seamen. There was no law or compact which could touch this international crime, so fatal to the power and interests of Great Britain. The only remedy lay with ourselves. Had we treated our good seamen with due liberality and kindness, no bribe would have induced them to quit their country, still less to fight against it. A peace of two-and-twenty years has kept this important question in abeyance; but, should a war suddenly break out, our indifference, carelessness, or apathy, may be most bitterly deplored.

To the Honourable T. Erskine.

Admiralty, 13th March, 1801.

My dear Sir,

My first object in coming to this Board was to reform the courts of Admiralty in the Colonies, with a view to check the vexations which the American commerce has been subject to, and Sir Wm. Scott, who is to name the new appointments, has it now under consideration.

Mr. King is probably not aware of the abuses which are committed by the American consuls in France, Spain, and Portugal, from the generality of whom any Englishman, the consul knowing him to be such, may be made an American for a dollar. I have known more than one American master carry off soldiers in their regimentals, arms, and accoutrements, from the garrison at Gibraltar, and there cannot be a doubt but the American trade is

navigated by a majority of British subjects, and a considerable one too. Thus it becomes a very difficult point to draw the line, and I have always considered this as the greatest evil arising from the separation.

I entertain a very high respect for the public and private character of Mr. King, and prize your friendship still higher; and you may rest assured that whenever Lord Hawkesbury makes a communication to me on this subject, I will do every thing consistently with my duty to the public to cement the union between the two countries.

Your's most truly,
ST. VINCENT.

The following letter probably refers to the proposed emigration of the Court of Portugal.

To the Duke of Northumberland.

Admiralty, 15th March, 1801.

My dear Lord Duke,

A thousand thanks for your obliging communication touching the Brazils. A prepossession in favour of that idea, in narrow Lisbon politics, has already done us irreparable injury, and Lucien Buonaparte has shown much address in imposing false intelligence on the government of Portugal.

Your's most faithfully,
ST. VINCENT.

To the Duchess of Gordon.

20th March, 1801.

Madam,

Your grace is perfectly correct in the good character of Lieutenant Maxwell, of the Venerable, and, exclusive of the interest your grace has taken in his fortunes, I should be very glad to do justice to his merit by promotion, if I was not precluded from making any, by

the incredible number of meritorious commanders upon half-pay who must be taken care of in the first instance.

Of Lieutenant Stoddard I know nothing more than that he stands the 89th man upon the list of lieutenants. Greenwich Hospital has always been considered as an asylum for wounded officers in preference to all others, and in the second place for those worn out by age and infirmities, proceeding from long and arduous services.

These considerations alone will govern my conduct in the administration of this patronage, uninfluenced by any protection whatever. Having written thus much on the subject in question, I beg leave to assure your grace that I shall be happy in an occasion to mark the respect with which I have the honour to be,

Madam,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

ST. VINCENT.

To Mrs. Boscawen.

Admiralty, 26th March.

Madam,

It is not in contemplation to remove Captain Rodney* from the Victualling Office to any other situation, and, should such an event ever take place, his successor must be selected from the list of captains in his Majesty's navy, or a very great injustice will be done to the profession; an act which, with every disposition to accommodate Mr. Bouverie, and to mark my respect to you, I persuade myself you will be the last person to urge me to after this explanation.

I have the honour to be, with great respect,

ST. VINCENT.

* The Honourable John Rodney, a retired captain, son of the late Admiral Lord Rodney. The captain, when in command of the *Ruby*, of sixty-four guns, in 1793, lost his leg by the upsetting of a carriage.

To Thomas Parly, Esq.

26th March, 1801.

My good Friend,

I believe your son had much better remain in the conduct of your business than seek an employment under government; for it is my fixed determination to fill all vacant offices with the most efficient men I can find, and to pay no regard to the recommendation of any person whatever, where the qualification of the candidate will not bear me out in the appointment. Meritorious clerks in office will have the first fruits, and admiral's secretaries and pursers the next.

As the father of the service, I cannot travel out of this record, except in very extraordinary cases.

I rejoice to learn so good an account of your health, and, with my best wishes to all your family, be assured I am very sincerely

Your humble servant,

ST. VINCENT.

The following letter, addressed to the most intimate friend Lord St. Vincent had, shows in a striking point of view his determined impartiality, and the fixed resolution he had formed not to depart from the principles laid down for the direction of his conduct in the arduous and onerous office he had now undertaken.

To Sir Charles Grey, K.B.

28th March, 1801.

My dear Sir Charles,

Lieutenant K—— has been playing a game to get to Ireland, which has lowered him very much in my opinion. He is brave and enterprising, but, like

the rest of the aristocracy, he thinks he has, from that circumstance, a right to promotion, in prejudice of men of better services and superior merit; which I never will submit to.

Having refused the Prince of Wales, Duke of Clarence, Duke of Kent, and Duke of Cumberland, you will not be surprised that I repeat the impossibility of departing from my principle, which would let in such an inundation upon me as would tend to complete the ruin of the Navy.

We propose to give Mr. K—— the command of one of the gun-brigs to be employed in the Baltic; he will not obtain rank by it, but the daring services he will be employed upon may lead to it.

You never will be well in the spring season upon the north coast, therefore pray come hither, and make your numerous friends happy—no one more so than

Your truly affectionate,

ST. VINCENT.

To John Robinson, Esq.

Admiralty, 30th March, 1801.

My dear Sir,

I certainly had no intention to run foul of your patronage, when I applied to Lord Auckland to give Mr. Stewart, master of the *Ville de Paris*, the command of a packet. The thing is done, and cannot be undone. While on this subject, I cannot but lament most exceedingly that borough influence should ever be exercised in such very important concerns as the navigation of packets. No wonder that so many of them have failed in their duty, and been captured in the most disgraceful and ignominious manner. Mr. Stewart will set such an example as must, I think, produce some amendment in the conduct of your Harwich men.*

Your's most truly,

ST. VINCENT.

* When going to the southward, with a convoy, in 1810, I remember falling in with a packet, bound to the West Indies. I had fifty sail of

To Mrs. Montagu.

Admiralty, 6th April, 1801.

My dear Madam,

From the incredible number of meritorious captains and commanders I have found without employment, I have been under the painful necessity of putting a total stop to promotion to either of those ranks, and I see no prospect of my being able to relax an iota upon this subject. The officers of the *Ville de Paris* remain as they did when I left her; and my own nephew,* commander of the *Stork* sloop, who is reputed an officer of uncommon merit and acquirements, stands as he did before I came into office; and I have refused to promote at the request of four princes of the blood. Having said thus much, I am sure you will not charge me with neglecting you, Madam, for whom I entertain the highest respect, and shall be proud of any occasion to prove with how much regard I am,

My dear Madam,

Your truly affectionate,

ST. VINCENT.

To Sir Charles Grey.

20th April, 1801.

My dear General,

A thousand thanks for your two kind notes. All the tales about the king, which have been in-

vessels with me, and we all outsailed her. The owners, no doubt, must have had some good borough influence. The master of her also, contrary to his duty, hove-to for me to come up with him, and, strange to say, both my brig and my convoy outsailed him afterwards.

* The present Rear-Admiral Sir William Parker, K.C.B. He commanded the *Amazon*, of 46 guns, and captured the *Belle Poule*, of about the same force, when the unfortunate *Linois* was taken in the *Marengo*, by the squadron under the command of Sir Harry Neale, in 1806.

dustriously propagated from quarters where they ought not to have been entertained, are utterly untrue. His Majesty rode to Blackheath on Saturday, and has done a great deal of business since; rather too much, for that retards his rapid recovery.

We are about to send an ambassador to the court of Petersbourg, and the moment he appears, Count Woronzow will be appointed here. Sir R. Abercrombie having got his army ashore at Aboukir, is another great object. I think the French have accounts from that quarter less favourable than they have published; for, as I can judge from the *Moniteur*, they are preparing the public mind for the evacuation of Egypt. Should their troops show a disposition to get to France, the game is up.

There is every good disposition towards you, my dear friend, in the successor of Mr. Pitt*. I had a long conversation with him upon your subject yesterday, in which he expressed the same feelings that are planted in the breast of

Your truly affectionate,

ST. VINCENT.

With reference to the following letter, I will state that there was, at this time, an inconceivable outcry and clamour against Lord St. Vincent, in all our dock-yards; not among the officers and labourers only, but extending to the married ladies of all ranks. Clerks, whose nominal income was £250 a year, kept their gigs and saddle-horses, and, consequently, rendered themselves liable to suspicions which produced inquiry, and inquiry frequently ended in expulsion.

* The Right Honourable Henry Addington, now Lord Sidmouth.

To Commissioner Fanshawe.

30th April, 1901.

My dear Sir,

I have more than suspicion to induce a belief that the shipwright officers in all the dockyards have tacitly encouraged the artificers in their late attempt to extort an increase of permanent wages; and that when the persons, who were deputed as delegates, applied for leave of absence, the above-mentioned officers were perfectly well acquainted with the object of their mission. I therefore hope and trust that the inquiry into this particular and most important matter will be so contrived and managed, that the whole will come out, and the onus be placed where it ought to be.

Your's, most truly,

ST. VINCENT.

To Sir Charles Grey, K.B.

9th May, 1901.

My dear Sir Charles,

I am extremely concerned to learn that the complaint in your head has increased. Every body here has suffered more or less from the long easterly winds we have experienced, and all are anxiously wishing a change.

We have accounts from Lord Keith down to the 18th of March, by the *Louisa* armed brig; but the public is very much disappointed, every one having laid his account in the battle on the 21st. It is, however, a great satisfaction to know, that the army was well supplied with sheep, poultry, and other refreshments, by the Arabs, at a cheap rate, and that there was no want of water. There had been a revolt at Cairo, to which place the Grand Vizier was marching. The Capitan Bey, precursor of the Capitan Pacha, had joined Lord Keith, with a squadron of Turkish ships of war and gun-boats, on the 18th; and he had been previously joined by *La Pique*, with the victuallers from England, and

by the armed transports, with troops, from Lisbon. We also learn, from Sir J. Warren, that he got sight of Ganthiaume's squadron on the 26th March, between the island of Sardinia and the coast of Barbary, and chased him the whole day, with a fair prospect of bringing him to action; but the night following having proved dark and squally, they contrived to give him the slip, and were seen going into Toulon (some of them much disabled, one in particular with a jury foremast), on the 4th April. Happily, the squadron under Sir J. Warren suffered very little. Moreover, the French had suffered severely by a contagious fever before they sailed from Toulon, having buried above two thousand men. This we have the best information upon, from the lieutenant who conducted the prisoners taken on board the *Africaine*, from Mahon to Toulon, and it accounts for the long detention of Ganthiaume in that port. Upon the whole, this is a very pleasant history; for had the French squadron, on entering the Mediterranean, proceeded directly to Alexandria, according to its orders, Lord Keith would have been beaten in detail, the French army effectually supplied with men and means, and our efforts completely baffled.

Although Mr. Chepher writes with caution, I am not without hope that my friend William will be sufficiently restored to enjoy life, and I do not despair of seeing him at the head of his regiment.

Your's, most affectionately,

ST. VINCENT.

P.S. I have this moment heard that Count Bernstoff has signified his intention to come here to negotiate a treaty of friendship, when he has an assurance of being kindly received; which assurance was despatched to him the instant his notification arrived.

To _____.

May 14th, 1801.

My dear C—,

I can, upon no consideration whatever, consent to a change of duties between you and Commissioner Inglefield, having laid it down as a fundamental maxim not to accommodate my brother at the expence of the public; and knowing me so well as you do, I cannot help expressing my surprise at the suggestion.

Very sincerely your's,
ST. VINCENT.

To _____.

May 10th, 1801.

My dear C—,

You do not quote my letter fairly. There is no vacancy at Halifax; and all I complain of is, your proposing to me a very improper arrangement, which would disgrace this Board, and myself more particularly, to serve your temporary purpose.

Very sincerely your's,
ST. VINCENT.

To A. Macdonald, Esq.

Admiralty, May 16th, 1801.

Sir,

I am confident that in replying to the chief of an illustrious race, for which I have long entertained the highest value and respect, I shall have credit for the justness of the principles on which I act.

Had you been witness to the lamentable state of the discipline of the Channel fleet when I took the command of it, which originated entirely from the licentiousness of the officers, you would not have thought, even in the case of a beloved brother, that the measures that have been taken to

restore it have been in any instance hard, or even more than absolutely necessary, to preserve the fleet.

No man can be more sensible than I am of the merit and eminent services of the Macdonalds, from the year 1758 to this hour ; and the moment I can, with any degree of propriety, call upon your brother, I will,

Having the honour to be, with great esteem, Sir,

Your most obedient humble servant,

ST. VINCENT.

To Commissioner Fanshawe.

May 17, 1801.

My dear Sir,

From our first acquaintance to the present hour, I have always entertained the highest opinion of your judgment, and respect for your character as an officer ; and I am persuaded, that the more authority and responsibility are vested in you, the more the internal arrangement and discipline of the yard will be improved ; and you may rely on the most decided support from me in carrying your measures into execution. I have great gratification in finding that an effectual stop has been put to the shameful proceedings of the dock-yard men, and I place the utmost degree of confidence in your exertions to prevent that spirit, by which their conduct seems to have been regulated, from again appearing.

If you can point out any of the inferior officers or others, who have, in any degree, encouraged the proceedings of the refractory people, or any superior officers who have not done their utmost to suppress them, it would be very desirable that you should do so, that they may, at least, be prevented from realizing that promotion, which, by a different conduct, they might otherwise, from their services, be entitled to expect.

Your's, most truly,

ST. VINCENT.

To the Duchess of Athol.

Fulham, 24th May, 1801.

Lord St. Vincent presents his compliments to the Duchess of Athol, and begs leave to inform her grace of his good disposition to meet her wishes upon all occasions, more particularly when they relate to an officer who was promoted by her grace's much lamented brother. Unfortunately for Lieutenant Lake, and many other valuable officers of his rank, there is such an incredible number of meritorious commanders out of employment, that Lord St. Vincent has felt it an indispensable duty to the public, and justice to them, to put a stop to all promotions to higher situations than lieutenant, except on occasion of distinguished services in arms ; and it has not come to his knowledge that the capture of the privateer her grace alludes to is one of those cases. He will take the earliest opportunity to inquire why Lieutenant Macdonnel is not on full pay ; his near alliance to the duchess has, he trusts, rendered him incapable of an unworthy action.

To the Marquis of Huntley.

May 25, 1801.

My dear Lord,

I shall always feel great pleasure in attending to your lordship's wishes. In the case of Lieutenant Tait I am not such a courtier as to take any merit with you, for I have assured Lord and Lady Duncan that I will promote him whenever I have done justice to the incredible number of commanders (191) on half-pay.

I have the honour to be, with great regard and esteem,

Your Lordship's most obedient humble servant,

ST. VINCENT.

CHAPTER IV.

To Lord Wycombe — To Marquis Townshend — To Mrs. Rogers — To Viscount Bulkeley — To T. J——n, Esq. — To Commissioner Saxton — To Wm. B——, Esq. — To Lord Grey — To Commissioner Duncan — To Marquis Clanricarde — To Lady Calder, &c. &c.

THE following letter to Lord Wycombe will be found to throw a considerable light on the wretched condition of the prisoners of war detained in this country ; not from any fault or omission on our part, but from the ungovernable pride and insolence of the man who ruled France at the time, and who, but for England, would have ruled the world. One of the heaviest charges against Napoleon, and one for which he must render a tremendous account, is that “ he opened not the doors of the prison house ” to the unfortunate captive taken in war. The crimes and the mental sufferings produced among these victims of tyranny are appalling to read of, and we cannot too bitterly execrate the policy of a despot who was the sole cause of them. That the French prisoners were addicted among other vices to that of gambling,

even to the very last garment on their backs, I know from personal observation.

To Lord Wycombe.

June 6th, 1801

My Lord,

I cannot express the obligation I feel to your lordship for the communication of Dr. Currie's letter, which I return. This Board had directed a flag officer to take to his assistance a commissioner of the sick and wounded Board, and one from the transport Board, and investigate the prisons at Porchester Castle and Plymouth, with the hospitals attached to them; and I am concerned to state that great abuses are reported to exist, in the supplies of bread and meat under the contracts; but it has not appeared, from the reports of these gentlemen, that the quantity of food allowed by government is insufficient for the sustenance of persons who are not required to labour. Both these reports, and others made under the direction of the late Board, ascribe the misery of the prisoners to have arisen from vice, and thirst for tobacco; and they quote many instances of men paying out of their rations losses at play, and disposing of their clothes and food for tobacco; evils that the officers appointed to superintend the establishments have not yet been able to suppress. These gentlemen received their appointments from my predecessor, and seem to be well chosen. A letter I have this instant received from a very worthy man who has the care of the sick at Norman Cross, will, in some degree, confirm what I have written to your lordship, and I do assure you that much of my time has been occupied in endeavouring to mitigate the sufferings of those poor fellows in whose case you are so laudably interested; and I have the honour to be, with great regard and esteem,

Your lordship's most obedient, humble servant,

ST. VINCENT.

To the Marquis Townshend.

June 14th, 1801.

My dear Lord,

The employments in my nomination are of the most efficient kind, and can only be filled by men qualified for them. It would be ruin to any person to become a purser without a regular training, and which late regulations of the Admiralty require. Naval agency forms no part of the patronage, as the dock yard offices must be filled by men who have served in the civil department of the navy at sea, or in the public offices attached to it; so that there is no appointment in the gift of the Admiralty adapted to Mr. J——s; and, in truth, there are so many men entitled to the few things that fall, that I cannot, without a departure from what is due to them, travel out of the record, otherwise the respect I entertain for your lordship and for Colonel Bloomfield would prompt me to pay every possible attention to Mr. J——s.

Believe me to be, my dear lord,

Your's most truly,

ST. VINCENT.

To Paul Orchard, Esq.

June 15th, 1801.

Sir,

The respect I entertain for you makes it very painful to refuse any thing you think fit to ask of me; but there are a great variety of objections to placing Mr. N—— at the head of a very important office, in which he has so long been a clerk, more especially under the new arrangement. I have the honour to be, with great regard and esteem,

Very much your's,

ST. VINCENT.

To Mrs. Rogers.

June 17th, 1801

My dear Madam,

Many of the opinions I formed before I came into office I find impracticable in the execution. The pension, as it relates to you, I have not been unmindful of, but have made no way in it, and I am sorry to add Mrs. R——ts obtained her's by an influence I do not possess. The number of widows and relatives of officers in extreme indigence, that it is my painful duty to see daily, wrings my heart-strings, yet I have no prospect whatever of being able to obtain relief for them. No man living has more feeling and sentiment than Mr. Addington; but, charged as he is with the care and management of the public purse, he must be prevented from fulfilling the impulse of those feelings.

Your's affectionately,

ST. VINCENT.

To Viscount Bulkeley.

June 18th, 1801.

My dear Lord,

I will give the necessary directions for the promotion of Mr. Richards, provided his Admiral and Captain subscribe to his merit, which I am sure your lordship will think a necessary precaution, when I assure you the list of lieutenants abounds with improper persons who have obtained promotions by influence. I see no objection to Captain Edwards applying for a month's leave of absence, and when he comes to town I shall be glad to see him.

Very sincerely your's,

ST. VINCENT.

To T. J——n, Esq.

July 13th, 1801.

Sir,

Viscount Nelson having communicated to me your letter of the 9th instant to his lordship, I feel it due to him to inform you that Lady Nelson interested every one very much in favour of your son, before her lord returned to England from the Mediterranean, and I felt every disposition in his favour; but, placed as I am here to do justice to the public and to individuals, and finding an incredible number of post-captains and commanders unemployed, it became my indispensable duty to put a stop to all promotion to those ranks, except in the cases alluded to in your letter; and, although I admit that very much is due from me to Lord Nelson, you must be aware that the smallest departure from the principle I have laid down would expose me to influence which could not be resisted: I therefore hope you will not press farther upon Lord Nelson, or upon, sir,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

ST. VINCENT.

To Sir Joseph S——y, Bart.

July 15th, 1801.

My dear Sir,

I am extremely concerned that the case of Lieutenant —— is so bad I cannot, without abandoning every principle, consent to a revision of it, and I do assure you that nothing short of the most determined resistance to the licentious disposition of a large portion of the lieutenants of the navy can preserve it from utter ruin and destruction.

Believe me to be, my dear sir,

Very sincerely your's,

ST. VINCENT.

To Commissioner Saxton.

July 20th, 1801.

My dear Sir,

Anxiously desirous as I am to put the dock yards upon the best possible footing, the first measure I think most important is to appoint the most capable men, in all respects, to the employments of master shipwrights, without attention to seniority or influence of any kind; and, having heard the most favourable report of those now in Portsmouth yard, I am much disposed to prefer them. Pretensions are got up in favour of Mr. Nelson, of Deptford yard, because he is a senior, which (unless his merits are of a superior kind) I cannot admit as a justifiable plea. This latter person, as well as Mr. Polhill, has served under your eye; and I will thank you for your undisguised opinion upon their respective merits; being well aware how difficult it is to obtain a precise knowledge of the real abilities and fitness of men to fill very responsible situations, from those under whom they have been educated.

Your's very sincerely,

ST. VINCENT.

To Wm. B——, Esq.

July. 25th, 1801.

Sir,

I am favoured with your letter of this date, and cannot avoid expressing some degree of surprise that you should think it possible a person, who has so long served his Majesty as I have done, can be without claimants of the highest pretensions, to the first fruits of the patronage of this office. At the same time, I have pleasure in repeating the high respect I entertain for your family, and the estimation I hold you in, and have the honour to be

Your most obedient servant,

ST. VINCENT.

To Earl Grey.

August 4th, 1801.

My dear Lord,

I have put Mrs. Colonel Greig's case into the hands of Mr. Addington, who has the very best disposition towards your lordship and every branch of your family. This last enterprise of Sir James Saumarez has placed us on velvet; the affair of the 6th July, although highly honourable to his Majesty's arms, having occasioned a considerable degree of anxiety in the minds of all the members of this Board, lest the magazines at Gibraltar should not be equal to the means to refit the ships, which had suffered so materially in their masts, yards, sails, and cordage. I have the pleasure to assure you that George stands very high in the opinion of royalty, and with my kindest wishes to all at Falladen and Howick,

Be assured I am always, my dear Lord,

Your's most truly,

ST. VINCENT.

To Ralph Warmeley, Esq.

August 10th, 1801.

Sir,

I have received great pleasure from your very obliging letter of the 5th May, and I do assure you that I have exerted every means in my power, both before and since I came into office, to put a stop to the vexations which the American Navigation has been subject to during the present war; and you probably have heard, that while I commanded before Cadiz, I showed every possible attention to the subjects of the United States. I shall steadily persevere in this conduct, being perfectly convinced of the wise policy of

bringing the two countries as near together as their interests will admit.

I have the honour to be,
With great regard and esteem,
Your most obedient humble Servant,
ST. VINCENT.

To Commissioner Duncan.

August 11th, 1801.

Sir,

No one can with justice accuse me of neglecting the children of the service. Your son was in the command of a sloop of war when I came to this Board, at which period I found more than one hundred commanders of merit upon half pay, some few of whom I have found means to give employment to. In justice to the rest, I cannot make an engagement to place Captain Duncan in a specific sloop, and after the declaration you made when we talked over this subject, I must confess myself a little surprised at a renewal of it.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your most obedient humble Servant,
ST. VINCENT.*

To the Marquis of Clanricarde.

August 17th, 1801.

My Lord,

I lament most exceedingly that Mr. H—— should have (so soon after his promotion) exposed himself to such

* I much fear the gallant young officer who was the subject of this letter was drowned in a sloop of war, going out to Newfoundland, soon after. With him and all his crew perished also Mr. Routh, the chief justice of Newfoundland.

a punishment as dismissal by the sentence of a court-martial; the more so, as the present state of the discipline of the navy does not admit of my showing that attention to your lordship's wishes upon his subject, which I should otherwise be disposed to do; and, when I inform you that scarce a day passes without a complaint of the same nature coming to this Board from some quarter or another, I am persuaded your lordship will see the impropriety of my interposition in favour of Mr. H——.

I have the honour to be,
With great respect, your Lordship's
Most obedient humble servant,
ST. VINCENT.

To Lady Calder.

Admiralty, August 17th, 1801.

My dear Madam,

There can be no difficulty in Sir Robert coming on shore whenever his health requires it, but there are insuperable objections to the Prince of Wales being in port any longer than Admiral Cornwallis thinks fit; for it would be a very partial consideration if she had any preference shown to her, the service off Ushant being much more severe than a run down the Trade and home again, to all but the chief.

Why Sir Robert should be angry at the letter I wrote him, the instant I heard of his approach, having made a tour to the rendezvous he was supposed to be upon, before it reached him, I cannot devise; but I do most sincerely lament that the good or bad opinion my brethren have of me should depend on such chimeras.

Your's most affectionately,
ST. VINCENT.

CHAPTER V.

Letters — To Marquis Townshend — To Lady Charlotte B—— — To Colonel Bastard — To the Earl of Dundonald — To Sir Charles Grey — To Sir Philip Stephens — To Mrs. Aylmer — To General Smith — To the Right Hon. George Rose — To Sir Charles Grey — To Baron Hotham — To the Earl of Uxbridge — To J. B. Bramstone, Esq. — To Mrs. Pigott — To Sir John Carter — To J. Godwin, Esq. — To Lady Calder — To the Marquis of Hertford — To Lord Grey — To the Duke of Beaufort — To the Bishop of Durham — To the Earl of Galloway — To the Duchess of Gordon — To the Earl of Northampton — To Governor Bentinck — To the Duke of Kent — To the Marquis of Townshend.

THE Earl of St. Vincent, in his situation of first lord of the Admiralty, had an arduous task in answering applications for promotion, which alone must have occupied a very considerable portion of his valuable time. The letter to the Marquis Townshend refers to an abuse which the laxity of the government, and the fear of invasion, had gradually introduced into the country. The coast on the south-eastern part of the kingdom, viz., Sussex, Suffolk, and Norfolk, was ornamented with gun-brigs, hauled into creeks, and laid up in snug corners, where the lieutenant had his cabbage-garden and his pigsty, and wherein it would not have been

very easy to have got their vessels to sea, had the appearance of an enemy required their presence.

To the Marquis Townshend.

August 22d, 1801.

My dear Lord,

The gun-boat at Blakeney had not escaped us, repeated orders having been sent to Lieutenant S—— to proceed to the Nore, in order to her being put to rights; and had he not been nearly allied to Lord Nelson, stronger measures would have taken place. I have every reason to believe the report of your lordship's tenant is correct, and I fear those mal-practices are not confined to Mr. S——.

Believe me to be, my dear Lord,

Your's most truly,

ST. VINCENT.

To Lady Charlotte B——.

Admiralty, 24th August, 1801.

Madam,

I had very great pleasure in showing the most attentive regard to your ladyship's son in a dangerous illness, and in promoting him, the moment he had completed his time, and passed the usual examination. It is therefore painful to observe to your ladyship, that his subsequent conduct has not been such as will induce me to take an interest in his further promotion, although I entertain a very great respect for your ladyship, and for the memory of his ancestors.

I have the honour to be, Madam,

Your most obedient humble servant,

ST. VINCENT.

To Colonel Bastard.

August 24th, 1801.

Sir,

The absence of the Comptroller of the Navy, who has gone into Kent to pay the last duties to a deceased friend, does not admit of the measures you so judiciously point out being carried into immediate execution ; but I will take care that the utmost degree of attention is paid to them, and that the Navy Board shall not be acquainted with the occasion of them.

I am by no means concerned at the discontented shipwrights of Plymouth-yard having quitted it. Some of them have attempted to get to America in a vessel from the Thames, and endeavours have been in vain used to lay hold of them. Should they reach that country, they will very soon repent of their migration.

We have lately got the better of a combination amongst the Victualling-office bakers, which has been suppressed by timely and rigorous measures, and a firm determination made to prosecute the parties, and never to admit one of them into the King's service, the frequent compromises with this description of people having done infinite mischief.

I beg leave to repeat how sensible we all are of the benefit the public service has derived from the very temperate and spirited conduct which was pursued at Plymouth, and how much we feel obliged to you, and your brother.

I have the honour to be,

With great regard and esteem, Sir,

Your most obedient humble servant,

ST. VINCENT.

With reference to the following letter, I have heard, from what I considered good authority, that Lord St. Vincent, when at the head of the

Admiralty, was so much pressed on the subject of Lord Cochrane's promotion for taking the Gamo, that it became almost a point of etiquette with the Earl *not* to make him a captain. An illustrious personage is reported to have said, "My lord, we *must* make Lord Cochrane post." To which Lord St. Vincent replied, "The First Lord of the Admiralty knows no *must*."

To the Earl of Dundonald.

Admiralty, 21st September, 1801.

My Lord,

I can have no difficulty in acknowledging, that the capture of the Gamo reflects the highest degree of credit on Lord Cochrane, and the officers and crew of the Speedy. The first account of that brilliant action reached the Admiralty very early in the month of August, previously to which intelligence had been received of the capture of the Speedy, by which Lord Cochrane was made prisoner; and until the exchange could be effected, and the necessary inquiry into the cause and circumstances of the loss of that sloop had taken place, it was impossible for the Board, consistently with its usual forms, to mark its approbation of his lordship's conduct. Lord Cochrane was promoted to the rank of post captain on the 8th August, the day on which his sentence of acquittal, for the loss of the Speedy, was received; which was all that could, under existing circumstances, be done. Having entered into this explanation with your lordship, it remains for me only to add, that however disposed the Board might be to pay attention to the merits of his lordship, it could not, consistently with its public duty, give him rank from the time of the capture of

the Gamò;* a measure quite unprecedented, without doing an act of injustice to other deserving officers.

I have the honour to be, my Lord,

Your lordship's, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

The case of impressment, alluded to in the following letter, is one, among many thousands, which constantly required the attention and interference of the Admiralty. It is impossible to describe the terror, the anxiety, the cruelty, the injustice, and the grievous wrongs inflicted on society in general, by the continuance of this shameful practice; and, during a peace of twenty-two years, no step (saving the Bill of Sir James Graham) has been taken to prevent the recurrence of the evil, in the event of war; and even Sir James Graham's Bill goes but a very little way towards a remedy.

To Sir Charles Grey.

September 25th, 1801.

My dear General,

I am extremely concerned to learn that you have had any thing like a serious attack, but rejoice most sincerely in your recovery. I made particular inquiry after you, Lady —— and Co., from our friend Towry, † who described you as looking thin, in all other respects well and in spirits. The old proverb, that it is an ill wind that blows nobody good, applies to Dr. Wardell's being called

* It was done in the case of two captains at a subsequent period of the war, when post commissions were antedated to the day of their action with the enemy.

† A commissioner of the victualling.

down by the death of his father, and I have no doubt he will be allowed to continue during the time you mention, unless the French make the descent they so much menace us with.

I have directed inquiry to be made into the circumstances which attended the impressing Joseph Wood, and will do my best to obtain his discharge, if it does not militate against the maxims of the Board, which are very rigid on this subject, and most necessarily so ; for it is extremely difficult to keep up our numbers, the loss of men (chiefly by desertion) exceeding manifold the recruiting of them ; so that much encouragement should not be given to Major Wood.

Menou has rejected the convention of Cairo, as far as relates to Alexandria, and reprobates the conduct of Belliard. Advices from Lord Elgin received this morning state the garrison to be in great want of flour, wine, spirits, and medicines, and that there is much discontent among the troops ; nevertheless, Menou seems determined to hold out to the last. General Baird was expected to arrive at Gaza the 6th of last month, and was directed to relieve a strong garrison left there by Sir J. Hutchinson. A hundred camels sent by Menou to collect provisions, &c., in upper Egypt, had been conducted by the Arabs in charge of them to our army. The French garrison of Cairo were embarking, at the date of the last letter from Lord Keith to Lord Elgin. All the reinforcements from Malta and England had arrived in good health ; so that we have every hope that the final event will be propitious, especially if the report of the desertion, and the sickness of the garrison, proves true. I understand from Prince William of Gloucester, that the great object of our friend Coote is a red riband ; and I also learn from H.R.H. the General had received some encouragement from Mr. Dundas to expect it. When you are quite at ease, I wish you would write me such a letter as I can show to Mr. Addington upon this, or any other matter where Coote

is interested. If we do not obtain peace, we must wound the enemy, wherever he is vulnerable; and there cannot be a fitter person for the purpose than Brigadier Maitland; but I have not heard of his being designed for any particular service.

Your's most truly,

ST. VINCENT.

*To General Smith.**

Admiralty, 29th September.

My dear General,

Many thanks for your obliging letter of yesterday. I have always been of opinion that a defensive war, to the degree of keeping all our force on this side, was very impolitic, and uncongenial to the feelings of the people at large, and I rejoice that the contrary principle meets your approbation. I never gave the smallest degree of credit to the newspaper reports of Sir Sydney Smith's intention to come to England before the business in Egypt should be finally settled. Besides 140 admirals on the list, you know there are some captains senior to him in the Mediterranean; so that, with the best disposition in the Admiralty and Lord Keith towards him, he could not serve in a higher rank than captain of *Le Tigre*.

When we next meet, I will explain, and I hope satisfactorily, why no promotion has or can take place, in consequence of the attack on the enemy's flotilla before Bologne, in which so much gallantry was displayed by both officers and men.

Believe me to be very sincerely,

Your's,

ST. VINCENT.

* This officer was the uncle of Sir Sydney Smith.

To the Right Hon. George Rose.

October 3, 1801.

My dear Sir,

It was with extreme concern I heard of the ill state of Lady Neale's health, and I do assure you I should have very great satisfaction in contributing to the conveyance of her ladyship to a milder climate; but, were it the case of the person most dear to me, I should prefer a packet to any other. We have a frigate going to the Mediterranean, but she is charged with the Algerine ambassador.

You who know how necessary peace is to us, will better know how to appreciate the preliminary articles, which Mr. Otto hopes he shall be justified in subscribing to.

By the account received from Alexandria yesterday, Lord Keith's letter to Lord Elgin says the redoubts were carried with little loss. Sir J. H. Hutchinson does not say a word in his upon the subject of the attack on them, so that I hope Mrs. Ricketts's information is unfounded.

With every kind wish, believe me to be,

Your's most truly,

ST. VINCENT.

*To Sir P. Stephens.**

Admiralty, 5th October, 1801.

My dear Sir,

Many thanks for your obliging letter upon the signature of the preliminaries, which I am proud of being an humble instrument in the attainment of.

I am beset, as you may imagine, with numberless applications upon the subject of promotion, which I have hitherto

* The late Sir Philip Stephens, so many years secretary to the Admiralty.

withstood ; but I agree with you that the Board should be governed by former practice at the close of such a successful naval war as we have witnessed. In this event, I will not be unmindful of Captain Reynolds.*

Believe me to be,

Very sincerely your's,

ST. VINCENT.

To Mrs. Aylmer

Admiralty, 7th October, 1804.

Madam,

I am honoured with your letter of yesterday, and I beg leave to assure you of my thorough good disposition in favour of your son, whose certificates of time have lain before the Board these two days. Both Sir Thomas Trowbridge and Captain Markham are extremely desirous to grant him a commission ; but the infantine state he must have been in when borne on the books of the Hyena and Argonaut, is an obstacle they find extreme difficulty to surmount ; and it is increased by the gap between his discharge from the Argonaut and his entry on board the Theseus.

I have the honour, &c., Madam,

Your most obedient humble servant,

ST. VINCENT.

To Sir Charles Grey.

October 7, 1801.

My dearest General,

I am most happy in your letter of the 4th giving me so good an account of your precious health, and that you intend being in town before the cold blasting

* He commanded the *Nymph*, 38 ; a fine frigate on the Halifax station, in 1812. He has been long dead.

winds visit the coast of Northumberland. Parliament meets on the 29th of this month, and your appearance on that occasion will certainly mark your attention to Mr. Addington, should it indent with a due attention to your health, the first of all considerations, and be otherwise convenient. Mr. Addington does not come to town to-day, but I will embrace the first favourable moment to state General Coote's pretensions, and your good wishes to him. The blockade of Alexandria has certainly been a very severe and arduous service.

George* dined and slept at Fulham yesterday, and diverted me very much with the description of his Weymouth campaign, which has riveted him in the good opinion and esteem of the king, who kept me an hour in his closet yesterday, and, among other subjects, spoke of George in a manner that delighted me beyond expression.

God bless you and your's, my dear lord, and be assured of the lasting esteem and regard of

Your truly affectionate

ST. VINCENT.

To Mr. Baron Hotham.

Admiralty, 7th October, 1801

My dear Sir,

It is impossible for you, or any of Commodore Sutton's connexions or friends, to feel more interested than I do in placing him above the reach of slander. It is justice to Admiral Cornwallis to state that he wrote me a very handsome letter about him; and I am persuaded that he (the admiral) will be much pleased with the appoint-

* The late Honourable Sir George Grey, Bart., late commissioner at the dock yard at Portsmouth, and many years flag-captain with the Earl of St. Vincent. He was captain of the *Boyne* when she was burnt at Spithead, in May, 1795; and also of the *Victory*, with Sir John Jervis, in the memorable 14th of February, 1797.

ment the Board has given him. To have contributed in the smallest degree to the comfort of you and your amiable family, is a very pleasing reflection to, my dear Sir,

Your very sincere obedient servant,

ST. VINCENT.

To the Earl of Uxbridge.

October 12, 1801.

My dear Lord,

I beg leave to assure your lordship that Captain Irby* has never been out of my recollection, and I hope soon to give him substantial proof of it.

I am bold to assert that the peace is the very best this country ever made ; and I consider it the happiest event of my life to have contributed to so great a blessing.

Believe me to be, my dear Lord,

Your's most truly,

ST. VINCENT.

I have carefully erased from the following letter all traces of the name and office in which the unfortunate person to whom it was addressed was employed. I wish to show the principles which guided Lord St. Vincent in his public conduct, while I avoid as much as possible wounding private feeling.

To —————

October 14, 1801.

Sir,

The letter which ———— delivered to me yesterday from you, wherein you desire to be superannuated,

* Rear-Admiral the Honourable Frederick Paul Irby, who, as captain of the *Amelia*, of 44 guns, on the coast of Guinea, fought one of the severest drawn battles I ever remember to have read of. I have duly recorded it in the " Naval History of Great Britain."

was accompanied by a letter from * * *, representing, "that your conduct in regard to your private affairs, and several recent transactions, which have lately been the town talk, appears to the other members of the Board in so reprehensible a light, that, in their opinion, you ought not to continue a member of a Board of such trust and responsibility, and of so much importance to the public, and requesting that steps might be taken for your removal.

Under other circumstances it would have been matter for consideration, whether, from the state of your mental or bodily infirmities, it would have been proper to allow you to retire from your situation at the ——— with a suitable provision for your future support; but, after so serious a charge has been exhibited against you by your colleagues, against which I fear it is impossible for you to justify yourself, I feel myself under the painful necessity of informing you that I cannot, consistently with my public duty, represent your case in such a light as may be likely to induce his Majesty to order a provision to be made for your future support and maintenance, which has been given to persons in your situation who have retired under different circumstances.

I am, Sir, your most obedient humble servant,
ST. VINCENT.

To the Earl of Cholmondeley.

Admiralty, 22d October, 1801.

My dear Lord,

Lord Hawkesbury is at Walmer Castle, and Mr. Addington at Wimbledon, but I have despatched a line to the latter; and as, without partiality, there is not so fit a person as your Lordship for the object in view, I am very sanguine of success, believing, as I do, that (with the exception of Lord Whitworth) no overture has been made to any one. I have some idea that Mr. Merry is to be em-

ployed, in some way, about Lord Cornwallis. I have nevertheless mentioned Mr. Arbuthnot, of whom I have heard great commendation in all the departments.

Be assured I always am,

Your's most truly,

ST. VINCENT.

To J. B. Bramston, Esq.

October 27, 1801.

My dear Sir,

It was yesterday determined between Lord Radstock and me, that Mr. Abdy, your relation, should accompany his lordship in the Theseus; which I fear is the last thing I can do for him.

With the approbation of such characters as you, we have little to apprehend from the shafts of those who think that no peace ought to have been made without the restoration of the house of Bourbon to the throne of France.

Your very sincere and obedient servant,

ST. VINCENT.

To Mrs. Pigott.

October 27, 1801.

My dearest Madam,

Although I cannot subscribe to the reasoning of Lady Charlotte Wrottesley, upon the subject of the ill treatment her ladyship conceives her brother has received, you may venture to assure her that the politics of Lord Tankerville have not operated, nor can they in the smallest degree, to the prejudice of Mr. Bennett,* as far as relates to me; and I have too high an opinion of my predecessor to suppose it possible they could have influenced him.

* Afterwards Captain the Hon. William Bennett. He lost his leg on board the Montague, on the 1st of June, 1794, and died of consumption some years after.

Pressed, as I am, by solicitations from all quarters, I hope you will turn the back of your hand to every application you receive; for the compliance with one will produce fifty.

Your most affectionate,

ST. VINCENT.

To Sir John Carter, Mayor of Portsmouth.

Admiralty, October 30, 1801.

My dear Sir,

I am this instant informed, by telegraph, of the death of Lord H. Seymour; which I do most sincerely lament. Without presuming to claim any thing touching his successor in the representation of Portsmouth, should a sea officer be thought of, you will find in Captain Markham* every thing you or your colleagues can wish or desire.

Your's most truly,

ST. VINCENT.

To Sir John Carter.

November 2, 1801.

My dear Sir,

A bad cold and sore throat have prevented my going out these three days, but I have conveyed to Mr. Addington your wishes about the patronage of the borough, and I have every reason to believe he will attend strictly to them.

Captain Markham will proceed to Portsmouth as soon as the writ is moved for, and both he and myself are very sensible of your kind attention to him. I write to Mr. Godwin by this post, and shall be glad to receive your instructions upon what is farther proper to be done.

My dear Sir,

Your very sincere and obedient,

ST. VINCENT.

* He was returned, accordingly, member for that borough.

To J. Godwin, Esq.

Admiralty, 2d November, 1801.

Sir,

Without the most distant idea of availing myself of the official situation his Majesty has been graciously pleased to advance me to, beyond what may be acceptable to you and the body corporate of Portsmouth, I beg leave to name Captain Markham to you, as a person whose public and private character will, I am persuaded, merit your esteem and regard, and as a fit candidate to represent you in Parliament, on the vacancy occasioned by the death of my much lamented friend, Lord H. Seymour.

I have the honour to be,

With great regard and esteem,

Sir, your most obedient,

ST. VINCENT.

To Lady Calder.

November 2, 1801.

Surely, my dear Madam, you cannot be serious in what your ladyship has written touching the views Sir Robert has entertained about the representation in Parliament.* If you are, it is the first knowledge I have ever had of such being his intention; and I certainly have had more or less conversation upon Portsmouth politics, with him and others, who were supposed to know something about the matter. This being the case, I feel myself exonerated of having knowingly counteracted his designs, by any public measure which it has been judged fit to adopt upon a late melancholy occasion.†

I have the honour, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

* Sir Robert never could have done more in Parliament than give a silent vote; and we had too many of that description in the House of Commons in 1801. Sir Robert was ill used by his enemies, and ill advised by his friends.

† The death of Lord Hugh Seymour.

To the Marquis of Hertford.

November 9, 1801.

My Lord,

Having marked my regard and esteem for your late brother through life, I feel every disposition to pay proper respect to his memory. Your lordship is not, I believe, aware that Lieutenant New, first of the *Sans Pareil*, is without promotion, having been superseded, some weeks ago, in the command of the *Lark* sloop, to which he had been appointed to act in an Admiralty vacancy; and I shall make it a point to promote him, in order to mark my regard for his late excellent patron.

I shall also appoint Mr. Yates to the office of naval store-keeper at Jamaica, if Mr. Dick should resign; but your lordship is quite mistaken in supposing that the appointment of the successor to Mr. Dick rested with the commander-in-chief; nor is it a situation ever expected to be given away by the Admiralty Board to his recommendation.

With respect to the succession to the *Topaz*, occasioned by the death of Captain Church, I feel it impossible to enter into any engagement on the subject. Indeed, I am not aware of Lieutenant Notts being yet a commander; but, whether he is or not, it is probable that, on the return of Rear-Admiral Montagu from his cruise, he will have made an arrangement for some friends of his own, or appoint persons recommended by me; as, from the great number of officers remaining unemployed, I have been reduced to the necessity of looking to foreign stations alone for promotion; no officers having been made at home, excepting for distinguished services; which I fear must operate to the exclusion of Lieutenant T——, who, though I believe him to be a deserving officer, has nothing of that description to plead.

When your lordship considers my situation, and the claims I must have upon me from all quarters for promotion, I persuade myself you will be disposed to think that I have not failed to do all that I consistently can in behalf of

the friend of your late brother ; and I feel particularly glad that your lordship has addressed the application respecting them to me, as, in the event of your having adopted any other mode, it would have precluded the possibility of my paying that tribute to the memory of Lord Hugh, which I anxiously wish and mean to do, in favour of Lieutenant New and Mr. Yates.

I have always entertained a good opinion of Captain Penrose ;* and should he prefer the command of a frigate to the *Sans Pareil*, which I hardly suppose can be the case, I shall have great satisfaction in accommodating him.

I have the honour, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

To Earl Grey.

November 18th, 1801.

My dear Lord,

I have been, and still am, torn to pieces by the cough you saw me in a paroxysm of, and it is thought proper to order me into the country, where I intend going in a day or two, and shall, probably, not see Mr. Addington in the interval. I therefore return General Coote's letters. Indeed, there is a passage in them relative to Sir J. H. Hutchinson, that I should doubt the propriety of communicating beyond ourselves ; it being in contemplation to give peerages to the two chieftains, and I believe a pension to Sir J. H. Hutchinson ; any thing, therefore, which diminishes in the smallest degree the exalted merit which is given to him here would be ill received.

I have spoken to Mr. Addington about Major Grey, and he is extremely well disposed to lend himself to aid his retreat from the army, as far as he consistently can ; but,

* The late Vice-Admiral Sir Charles Vinicombe Penrose, whom every one that knew loved and respected.

from what dropped, I fear he will not quite come up to our expectations. He wishes very much to see your lordship, and the sooner that takes place after your return to town the better. Although I have not been successful in my other object, I have the satisfaction to acquaint you that matters are in such a train as to give me every hope, when a fair occasion presents, the persons in question, about whom we are so much interested, will unite for the good of their country, and act together through life.

Your's most truly,

ST. VINCENT.

To the Duke of Beaufort.

Admiralty, 18th November, 1801.

My Lord Duke,

It is impossible for me to give greater proof of the respect I entertain for the memory of the late Sir Charles Thompson, than by the solicitation I urged with the former Board of Admiralty, to place Sir Norbonne on the list of lieutenants; which, however, were fruitless, on account of his youth and inexperience. Nevertheless, as soon as I came to this Board, I gave him an appointment; but I cannot, in justice either to him or the service, think of further promotion before he has acquired more professional knowledge and experience.

I have the honour to be,

Your Grace's, &c.,

ST. VINCENT.

To the Bishop of Durham.

November 21st, 1801.

My Lord,

I am honoured with your lordship's letter of the 19th, enclosing one from Sir William Guise, who is per-

fectly correct in his statement of the great protection I have shown to his brother, and which, exclusive of the desire I always have to pay attention to your lordship's wishes, I am very well disposed to continue. Yet I cannot conceal from you my opinion, that it would not be advantageous for Lieutenant Guise, or for his Majesty's service, to give him further promotion, until he has acquired a much greater degree of experience than he now possesses.

I have the honour to be,

Your Lordship's, &c.,

ST. VINCENT.

To the Earl of Northampton.

Langtons, Dec. 1, 1801.

My Lord,

I am honoured with your lordship's letter, 29th November, in favour of Lieutenant S——y, of the Dolphin cutter. The line of service he has preferred is not that from whence promotion should, in my judgment, be given, unless some brilliant and successful action with the enemy has grown out of it; for I have, through life, discouraged every friend of mine from serving in a cutter or hired armed vessel. At the same time, I feel every disposition to show attention to your recommendation,

Having the honour to be,

My Lord, &c.,

ST. VINCENT.

On the above subject his lordship used to say that a good officer was thrown away in a cutter, and a bad one had no business there. It is only men of a certain description who are fit for them — merely good sailors, with a common education.

To Governor Bentinck.

Langtons, 3 Dec., 1801.

My dear Sir,

I communicated your former letter to the Duke of Portland, Mr. Addington, and Lord Hawkesbury, with observations, which I felt due to you. Lord H. desired to keep the letter, and I was in hopes something would have arisen out of it to the country.

I thank you for the enclosure in your last, which gives a more favourable picture of the state of France than I have yet seen. All those I have conversed with, who are lately come from that country, describe the capital as the meridian of splendour and luxury, and the provinces the very reverse; but France possesses such advantages in extent of territory, produce, coast, and climate, that, under a tolerable government, she will soon recover her manufactures and commerce. The toughest piece of work will be the reduction of her colonies to the slavish obedience necessary for the cultivation of them.

My dear Sir,

Your's very truly,

ST. VINCENT.

To H. R. H. the Duke of Kent.

Rochetts, 30th Dec., 1801.

Sir,

Not knowing what is meant by the pension list, I cannot give the definitive answer which it is equally my duty and inclination to do, touching the wishes of Her Royal Highness the Princess Augusta, in favour of Lieutenant William N.——ll, who does not appear to have received a wound, which can alone entitle him to a pension.

Should his object be to get placed on the superannuated list of lieutenants, I beg of you to assure Her Royal High-

ness that no officer junior to him on the list shall take place of him.

I have the honour to be, with very high respect,
Your Royal Highness's dutiful and obedient,
ST. VINCENT.

To the Marquis Townsend.

Rochetts, 31st Dec., 1801.

My dear Lord,

I have the honour to acknowledge your lordship's letter of the 29th, enclosing an application from several respectable gentlemen of Yarmouth, in favour of Lieutenant William Fisher. In justice to myself, without meaning to assume an extraordinary degree of merit for his promotion to the rank of lieutenant a short time since, it is fit your lordship should be acquainted, that having been apprized by a gentleman at Yarmouth that Mr. John Fisher had a son on board the *Dragon* in the Mediterranean, I wrote immediately to Captain Campbell, and requested he would cause Mr. William Fisher to be examined for a lieutenant the moment his time was completed; and I also took measures to have him appointed to a vacancy. Before either of these events could take place, Captain Campbell was made an Admiral, and being superseded in the command of the *Dragon*, came to England, and brought Mr. William Fisher with him; and the instant he had passed his examination for lieutenant, I directed a commission to be made out for him, the whole merit of which (if there is any) rests with me, not with Admiral Campbell. The fact is simply this—I felt a pride in serving a member of a worthy family, whose borough politics had been adverse to me, and when I recommended him to Admiral Campbell, I was ignorant that he had the smallest degree of interest about him. It is evident the Fisher family did not give me credit for so much liberality, by ascribing to Admiral Campbell that which

I know he disclaims. The misrepresentation can never operate against the young man in question; and though I cannot, upon any principle of rectitude, comply with the application, on account of the short service and standing of Mr. William Fisher on the list of lieutenants, I will not be unmindful of him.

With many thanks to the Marchioness and your Lordship for your kindness to us,

Believe me to be,

Your's, &c.,

ST. VINCENT.

CHAPTER VI.

Preliminaries occasion partial discontents in the fleet—Mutiny in Bantry Bay — Dreadful consequences—Great misconduct of the officers — Too much lenity shown to them—Too much severity to the seamen—Pernicious effects of this on the service throughout the war — Lord St. Vincent's correspondence with the following noblemen, gentlemen, and others — Duke of Portland — Earl of Portsmouth — Lord Winchelsea — Commissioner Fanshawe — To Mrs. C—— — To Mr. Beddingfield — To Mr. Nepean—To John Darby, Esq.—To Colonel Levison Gower — To the Earl of Berkeley — To W. Jolliffe, Esq., on the death of his son, killed at the Nile — To Commissioner Inglefield — To Mr. Nepean — To Mrs. Robertson — To Mrs. Paulett — To the Countess of Portsmouth — To Major-General Gascoyne — To Miss C. Egan — To the Earl of Westmoreland — To the Right Honourable Henry Dundas.

THE preliminaries of peace were agreed on between the two great belligerents, France and England, late in the year 1801, although the definitive treaty was not signed till the following year.

The natural impatience of the seamen to be freed from the restraint of a ship of war, and to be early on board the merchant ships which usually fit out and sail in the spring of the year, occasioned, as is usually the case at

the conclusion of a war, partial ebullitions of mutiny. The only one of any consequence was that which occurred on board the *Téméraire*, in Bantry Bay. Rear-Admiral George Campbell had his flag on board of her. I have given the particulars of this fatal event in the "Naval History," and only recur to it now with sorrow and regret, because my illustrious friend, the Earl St. Vincent, was at the head of the Admiralty at the time. The language of the officers at the wardroom table was, in all probability, the chief exciting cause, and, because *they* were not punished, *the seamen were*, with a degree of severity which, although it *might* be justified under the peculiar situation of the empire, yet I shall never cease to deplore, as one of the most fatal blots on our naval annals. It was an unkind and ungrateful return to the brave fellows who, during a war of unexampled success and glory, had faithfully served their country. When they saw the olive branch of peace, the fruits of their own valour, they were only too eager to seize the first fruits of it; stimulated thereto by the intemperate and thoughtless language of their officers, who declared their intention of immediately retiring on half pay, as nothing could be gained by going to the West Indies in time of peace.

As soon as the orders were received for the squadron, of which the *Téméraire* was one, to

prepare for a voyage to that destination, the seamen of that ship declared they would not go. The mutiny was almost instantly suppressed, by the determination of the rear-admiral and his officers, and the ring-leaders were secured. Here I wish I could draw a veil over all that passed. But, I dare not utter what is false, if I dare not conceal what is true. I was present at the trial, in Portsmouth Harbour, and saw the prisoners. They were the noblest fellows, with the most undaunted and prepossessing mien, I ever beheld—the beau ideal of British sailors; tall and athletic, well-dressed, in blue jackets, red waistcoats, and “trowsers white as driven snow.” Their hair, like the tail of the lion, hung in a cue down their back. At that time, this last article was considered, as indeed it really was, the distinguishing mark of a thorough-bred seamen. Unfortunately, these gallant fellows were ignorant as they were impatient, and the custom of the time was to hang every one who should dare to dispute the orders of his superior officers. Had as much reward been held out for good conduct as there was punishment for bad, we should never have required such examples, or wanted seamen in time of need; but our navy had till then been managed by men whose minds were not sufficiently enlightened to enable them to see that nothing more than a simple act of justice was

wanting to satisfy the seamen. All the worst men, or what were expressively called the "raff," should have been paid their wages and discharged; and the best should have been retained on double pay, until the definitive treaty was signed; and even then the government should have charged itself with providing them good employment, either in the king's or in the merchant service, regardless of the expence.

Narrow-minded political economists, often the most extravagant beings in the land, will tell us that we could not afford this outlay. I tell them, in reply, that they know nothing about the matter. If we *had* afforded it, we should have saved millions; we should have saved the last American war, and all the noble ships we lost by capture—ships taken from us by the very men whom our political economists had driven, by their ill-timed parsimony, into the American navy. Only let us make the experiment; give every able-bodied seamen, of good character, £4 per month, of twenty-eight days, or £52 a-year, and you need not give yourselves any more concern about America or impressment; you need not hang or flog any more of your brave defenders: for it is only the bravest, though often the most ignorant, who commit themselves. The only punishment you would need then would be to disrate, from able-bodied to ordinary, in time of war, and turn the

culprit on shore, as we now do in time of peace.

Unhappily, we had not studied these matters in 1802. Impressment had always, as was supposed, filled up our ships; but no one ever calculated the price at which the men were purchased. True you had the men, but without their hearts; they never loved you, nor their country, for denying them the common rights of Englishmen—a participation in the blessings of that constitution of which you so justly boast, and of which you so unjustly rob them.

As a cabinet minister, and more particularly as first lord of the Admiralty, I shall always regret that Lord St. Vincent sanctioned the punishment of those unfortunate men. But it was what was then “the manners and customs in such cases used at sea.” The same wayward policy which murdered poor Byng executed those men. It was then fatally and erroneously thought necessary. We now know that a different and milder course will answer much better. The execution of Chesterman and the other mutineers of the *Téméraire* cost us more than I am willing to believe or to own; but it certainly lost us for a time the good will and affection of our sailors. Of this truth I was made fully sensible, not only in our passage to the West Indies, with Admiral Campbell, but in all the subsequent years of the war up to

1814. We could perceive among the seamen a sullen and lifeless obedience, a scrupulous attention to all orders, but no voluntary service; they did their duty from fear, not love. When we crossed the tropics, on our passage to the West Indies with that squadron, I observed scarcely any of the usual saturnalia, so common and cheering in the dull monotony of a trade wind; in short, we had the effigies of the seamen, but their animation was fled. I have made this digression purposely to call the attention of the government and the profession to the great evil of neglecting the training and education of our sailors, to the better rewarding of good conduct; and to making not only expulsion in peace, but loss of servitude and emolument in war, the only punishment for negligence or crime.*

How the time of Lord St. Vincent was employed after he came into office, as first lord of

* I leave this as a warning to my country. I will never let a publication of my own come from the press without, in some way or other, referring to this subject. It is one of paramount importance, and I have treated of it largely in my "Naval History," as well as in the little book called "The Bible and Spade," published by Nisbet, and also in a letter to Sir James Graham, given in my translation of "Ducpetiaux." If we would have good and faithful seamen, in sufficient numbers to man our ships, both naval and mercantile, without impressment for the navy, we must train them up from early youth to habits of virtue and temperance, and give them *full* and *ample* remunerations for their services in manhood, with security from penury and want in their old age. I most earnestly pray that in the next parliament we may have men of sense and influence enough belonging to our own profession, who will fearlessly advocate the cause of the sailors—the real tars. On the

the Admiralty, has been shown by his letters ; and if we consider the numerous calls upon his patience, and the variety of affairs which required his deep attention, both in the cabinet and at the Board, even to a much greater extent than had been attempted by any of his predecessors, we shall be astonished at his doing so much. Nor could he have gone through the work, had it not been for his habits of early rising, and constant application to business. He must either have sunk under it, or resigned his situation. His health did indeed fail him for a considerable period ; but the enjoyment of Rochetts, and the assiduity of the members of the Board and the secretary, prevented his absence being felt as much as it otherwise would.

The letters which follow will, for the most part, speak for themselves.

To the Duke of Portland.

Rochetts, 4th January, 1802.

My dear Lord Duke,

I thank your grace kindly for the interest you take in the recovery of my health, which I have

score of neglect, the officers have much to complain of, but I for one shall be satisfied if the sailors are properly rewarded. I am quite ready to prove that if we had employed, during the late war, 150,000 men in four classes, at £50, £25, £18, and £10 per annum each for twenty years, they would have cost us only £4,450,000 a-year for wages, and we should have saved the last American war, and also immensely in desertions, punishments, pressgangs, and popularity.

reason to believe is now in fair train. The anxiety I have undergone in not being able to attend to my duty, has certainly retarded it considerably.

Your grace's wishes in favour of Captain Byng shall be attended to, and I will not be unmindful of Captain Otley. Mr. Morris is, I believe, a lieutenant ; at least I gave directions that a commission should be made out for him, the moment I learned he had passed his examination.

I wish I could see my way as clearly about the promotion of Mr. Mounsey. I have not yet been able to provide for one friend of my own on the list of lieutenants ; which is the best apology I can make for expressing a doubt about him. At the same time, I beg your grace will rest assured that nothing will afford me greater satisfaction than to approve myself,

Yours, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

On the 29th of April, 1802, Lord St. Vincent brought out a very liberal naval promotion, and although I had the good fortune to be included in it, I may say that it was, generally speaking, impartial, and bestowed on officers who had faithfully at least, if not brilliantly, discharged their duty. It gave a stimulus to the service, which it much wanted ; yet, like all other promotions, it made many discontented and many ungrateful.

Many officers who accepted of the Sea Fencibles, established during the late war, fancied it was to be considered as active service, and that it would have been no bar to their future prospects of promotion : but in the course of a few

years, they were woefully undeceived, and the following letter will show pretty clearly in what estimation such services were held at head quarters.

To the Earl of Portsmouth.

January 4, 1802.

My Lord,

I cannot possibly agree in opinion with your lordship, that a person sitting quietly by his fireside, and enjoying very nearly a sinecure during such a war as we have been engaged in, has the same pretensions to promotion with the man who has exposed his person, and hazarded his constitution in every clime. At the same time I admit that the command of the Sea Fencibles has not been considered an impediment to promotion; and it will afford me great pleasure if I can at any time, consistently with what is due to officers who have highly distinguished themselves, meet your wishes in favour of Captain F.

Having the honour to be,

Your Lordship's, &c.,

ST. VINCENT.

To the Earl of Winchelsea.

Admiralty, 10th January, 1802.

My Lord,

Having long ago instructed Sir J. Duckworth to appoint Captain Fielding* to the first Admiralty vacancy of post captain, I am rather surprised at his troubling your lordship with the order, which shall be attended to the

* The late Rear Admiral Charles Fielding. When an officer attempted to make choice of a station for himself, he was sure to receive a rebuke from the Earl of St. Vincent.

moment the list of promotions appears, in the usual form of a return; happy in this, as I shall be on all future occasions, to give proof of the sincere regard I entertain for the memory of my late valuable friend, and of the respect with which I have the honour to be,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

To Robert Fanshawe, Esq., Commissioner at Plymouth Dock.

(SECRET AND CONFIDENTIAL.)

January 18, 1802.

Sir,

I desire you will take immediate measures for securing all the notes for extra,* which have been granted in your dock yard from the commencement of the present war, to the 31st December, 1801, so that they may be produced by you the instant they shall be called for; and I have to request you will keep as a profound secret from every person, that this requisition has been made by me, as well as the purpose for which the notes are secured.

I have the honour to be, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

To Mrs. C——t.

Rochetts, 31st January, 1802.

Madam,

It is unfit for me to enter into a discussion on the subject which induced a court-martial that has given me more pain than I can express. The minutes and sentence

* Extra duties, supposed to have been performed by the dock yard men.

are now before me, and I shall be extremely happy if I can find in them aught to extenuate, in such a degree, as to justify my carrying into execution the friendly intentions I have always felt towards your son, who was imprudent in availing himself of an invalid ticket to return to England; and were it in my power to replace him in the *Hydra*, on her arrival in England, I do not think it would be well judged.

Believe me, with great respect,

Madam, &c.,

ST. VINCENT.

To Mr. Beddingfield.

Lord St. Vincent is very much distressed by the frequent complaints he receives of delays in the payment of what is due to the widows and mothers of deceased seamen; one of which is enclosed; and he relies on the zeal and activity of Mr. Beddingfield to put an end to the cause with all possible despatch.

February 21st, 1802.

To E. Nepean, Esq.

March, 1802.

My dear Nepean,

The persons recommended by the surveyors of the navy to be promoted in the vacancy occasioned by the dismissal of Mr. M——l, appearing to me altogether incompetent to root out the abuses (to say no worse of them) which have crept into Plymouth yard, and the disposition which has manifested itself to obstruct and defeat the new system, requiring a man of firmness and intelligence not likely to be intimidated by any overweening influence, has determined me, after the most mature consideration of

the subject, to appoint Mr. Tucker; not only because I am convinced of his fitness, by the testimonials I have received from the body he lately served, but that, standing alone in Plymouth Yard, he has had the courage and ability to develop a practice equally disgraceful to the civil department of the navy, and ruinous to the country, and which I have the authority of Sir W. Rule to assert never would have been exposed by any other man.

I enclose the arrangement for filling all the employments which will be vacated by the resolution of the Board, and desire that the latter part may be complied with as soon as possible by the Commissioners of the Navy; several deserving men having been long kept out of the situation intended by me, and signified months ago.

I am, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

To John Darby, Esq.

Admiralty, 3d February, 1802.

My dear Sir,

I am extremely concerned to learn the cause of your trip to Ireland, but heartily hope it will please God to spare your brother. I do not recollect having ever heard a remark made upon Sir James Saumarez's letter; but I am persuaded our friend, the captain of the Spencer, must have felt some injustice done to that ship, or he would not, even to you, his beloved brother, have stated what you have been so obliging to communicate. He is, I find, detached to the West Indies, with a squadron under his orders; which, I trust, he will consider as a mark of confidence; for Sir J. Saumarez would not have so placed him without it; therefore, pray do all you can to keep his mind at ease.

Believe me, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

To Colonel J. Leveson Gower.

February 12th, 1802.

Sir,

I should have apprised you of the promotion of your brother, but that I did not like to affix a merit to an act of friendship in favour of a family I have long held in the highest respect and esteem, therefore strove to avoid receiving the acknowledgment conveyed in your obliging letter of the 10th. I beg leave to assure you, that I shall be happy on all occasions to give proof of the esteem and regard with which, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

To the Earl of Berkeley.

February 13th, 1802.

My dear Lord,

Lieutenant G——e has received from me the utmost possible degree of protection, both while my flag was flying, and since I was placed at this Board. Had he been my son, more could not have been done for him. I know your lordship likes plain dealing; I therefore have no hesitation in declaring to you, that it would be a great disadvantage to him, and an injury to the public, to advance him higher at present.

Your's, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

To W. Jolliffe, Esq.

Admiralty, 16th February, 1802.

Sir,

After many a fruitless search, I have not been able to find a copy of the letter I had great pride in writing to you, in commendation of your late gallant son, Lieutenant Jolliffe, who fell in the glorious battle of the Nile, on board

his Majesty's ship the *Bellerophon*, while making the most spirited and judicious exertions at his quarters to maintain the conflict that ship was engaged in against the *Orient*, one of the most powerful ships in the French navy. Much as you, and every person who had the pleasure of his acquaintance, have to lament the loss of this excellent youth, it is no small consolation that he died as he lived, an honour to his country, and an ornament to his profession. In paying this last tribute to his memory, I feel a mixture of pain and gratification, better felt than described ; and,

I have the honour to be, your's, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

To Commissioner Inglefield.

March 8th, 1802.

My dear Sir,

I have many apologies to make to you for having thus long delayed answering your obliging letters. A long and serious illness has been the real cause of this omission.

I have seen your prodigy, who was presented to me by Commissioner Duncan, and appears to be a very extraordinary creature.* Sir Joseph Banks advised his being apprenticed to a mathematical instrument maker, and he is more versed in these matters than I am. I gave no other opinion than to express my readiness to contribute to his support.† Joseph King is handsomely rewarded for his services, and established as boatswain of the hulk at Gibraltar, with the pay of a first-rate, and victualling of the ordinary of Gibraltar yard ; and, I believe, is well satisfied. His pension being continued to his wife, should she survive

* The extraordinary creature here alluded to, I believe, was a poor boy, who possessed wonderful natural powers of calculation.

† " Joe King," as he was familiarly called by naval men at Gibraltar, was a well-known character, a great favourite for his zeal and ability as a seaman. I fear he lost his life, when in the above employment, by falling from the head of the shears, while he was attending to the lashing of the purchase-block.

him, will convey to you the sense entertained of his merit, both by Navy and Admiralty Board.

Very sincerely your's,

ST. VINCENT.

To Evan Nepean, Esq.

Rochetts, March, 1802.

My dear Nepean,

It was my intention to have returned to town to-day, but I have given way to the solicitations of Lady St. Vincent, founded on the benefit I daily receive from this air and retirement, to remain a few days longer. I therefore enclose a letter I have received from Mr. Thornton, with one to him from Mr. Bayley, containing a proposition to buy up a quantity of masts at Riga, to prevent their falling into the hands of the French. As I conceive we are well stocked with masts and hemp, this is a question of state policy, to be decided on by the cabinet. In the meanwhile I will thank you to communicate it to Sir Andrew Hammond. I apprehend the timber-logs, stated as necessary for the stowage of the masts, are fir, although Lord Hawkesbury, in a conversation with Captain Markham, spoke of the large quantity of oak timber which might be obtained through the medium of Mr. Thornton. I will thank you to communicate these two letters to Sir A. Hammond, and ask his opinion on the subjects of them. Contracts I conceive to be much more advantageous to government than purchase by commission; but Mr. Bayley's reasoning tends to prove, that a contract for masts, to any extent, cannot be complied with. Of this the Navy Board must be fully competent to judge. If we are not in immediate want of masts, this becomes a question of state, and must be referred to the cabinet.

I am, &c.,

ST. VINCENT.

To Mrs. Robertson.

Admiralty, 20th March, 1802.

Madam,

I beg you will be assured, that nothing would contribute more to my satisfaction than to add to the consolation which you very obligingly acknowledge to have received from me. But when I tell you, that the utmost I have been able to obtain for the widow of a flag-officer is £100 per annum, and the like annuity to be divided amongst her five daughters, precisely under the same restrictions that you are, you will perceive the difficulty, amounting to impossibility, of my achieving an addition to your pension. Nothing can be more praiseworthy than your conduct in the education of your children. Should your son be intended for the naval service, I will place his name on the list of candidates for the Royal Foundation in Portsmouth Academy. With my best wishes for the health and prosperity of you and your family,

Believe me to be, Madam,

Your's, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

To Mrs. Paulett.

March 27th, 1802.

Madam,

Although I cannot admit the force of your argument in favour of Captain M———y, there is something so amiable and laudable in a sister contending for the promotion of her brother, that no apology was necessary for your letter of the 24th, which I lose no time in acknowledging; and,

I am, Madam, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

To the Dowager Countess of Portsmouth.

Admiralty, 1st April, 1802.

Madam,

With all the respect and deference due from me to your ladyship, the justice I owe to the naval service requires that I should make a distinction between officers who have hazarded themselves in all climates during the late war, and those who have enjoyed lucrative employments near their own door, without being exposed to the arduous and eventful services the first-mentioned have undergone.

I have the honour to be, &c.

Your ladyship's, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

To Major General Gascoyne.

April 7, 1802.

Sir,

The claims of the numerous officers who have hazarded their persons in all services and climates, while Lieutenant E. F—— has enjoyed a lucrative employment at his ease on shore, prevent my giving him the smallest encouragement to expect promotion; otherwise, I should have been happy in the opportunity of complying with the wishes of the major and bailiffs of Liverpool, and testifying the respect with which, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

To Miss C. Egan, Bon Success, Lisbon.

Admiralty, 1st April, 1801.

My dear Madam,

A thousand thanks for your obliging letter, which gives me the satisfaction of learning that you and your amiable sisters are in good health. The prayers of the righteous will always prevail; and those you have had the partial kindness to offer up for me, have succeeded

to your utmost wishes ; for I am raised to the highest situation a sea-officer can ambition, and am endeavouring by my conduct to shew that I am not totally unworthy of it. I entreat the continuance of your holy remembrance, and with my kind love to your sisters,

Believe me to be, your's most affectionately,
ST. VINCENT.

To the Earl of Westmoreland.

Admiralty, 29th April, 1802.

My dear Lord,

It is morally impossible to give Lieutenant F. Fane* the two steps of commander and post-captain at once, and he must go abroad to obtain the last step, to effect which I will appoint him to the command of a sloop, either in the Mediterranean, or on the Halifax station. Your lordship will recollect he has not been yet a year a lieutenant, though his promotion took place the instant his time was served, and he had passed his examination. Exclusive of the interest you take in his fortune, Lady Elizabeth and Mr. Fane have every claim upon me, and I feel confident that they are convinced I have not let slip any occasion during the last seven years to show my attachment to the interest of their son, who is truly deserving. But there is a line of conduct which cannot be departed from, without being exposed to just reproaches, and every species of inconvenience. Mr. J——s's services are not brilliant ; nevertheless, I have great pleasure in adding his name to the list of candidates, happy on every occasion to give proof of the esteem

With which I have the honour to be, &c.
ST. VINCENT.

* Now Rear-Admiral Francis Fane.

To the Right Honourable Henry Dundas.

Admiralty, May 2, 1802.

My dear Sir,

Mr. Nepean has put into my hand your letters to him of the 21st and 28th of April, and that of yesterday, and I am extremely concerned to find that the names of three persons recommended to you by the city of Edinburgh have never before been mentioned to me. All those who stood on my list, viz., Messrs. W. Young, Charles Inglis, Samuel Pym, are promoted from the rank of commander to that of post-captain; Lieutenant W. Richan and D. H. Mackay to the rank of commander. Mr. — a midshipman, having unfortunately made his appearance before the Board, was objected to in such a manner that I could not justify giving him a commission. Mr. Wilkie could not be promoted, for the reason assigned in my letter of the 10th of June last.

The names of Ramsay, Watson, and Sharpe, are new to me, and I have greatly to lament that I did not know the preference you gave to Captain Watson in time; otherwise I would have contrived to squeeze him in, although I could not possibly have taken care of the other two.

At your leisure I should be very thankful for your ideas upon building ships for the navy at Bombay, which I should prefer receiving on paper.

I have the honour to be, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

CHAPTER VII.

Letters continued—To the Marquis Cornwallis—To Lord Dorchester—To George R——, Esq.—To the Rev. W. Ward—To the Bishop of Durham—To Lady E. Fane—To the Marquis Cornwallis—To Sir John Carter—To Sir Evan Nepean—To Robert Alderson, Esq.—To John Palmer, Esq.—To Sir Evan Nepean—To Mr. E. Henry—To the same—To the Right Hon. C. F. Greville—To the Hon. George Villiers—To Sir E. T.—To Lord Elliot.

• *To the Marquis Cornwallis.*

18th May, 1802.

My Lord,

With every disposition to pay the most prompt attention to your Lordship's wishes in favour of Captain Goate, I have greatly to lament that it is not at present in my power to comply with them. It is possible that he was the only commander serving under the orders of Admiral Cornwallis who was not included in the late promotion; but there were very many employed in the Channel precisely in the same predicament. Captain Goat was placed in the command of the finest sloop I have had the disposal of, some months ago, at the request of Sir Wm. Scott, to whom I have lately given assurances that he shall be continued in the command of her, with every other regard to his interests that I possess, and I shall be happy on this, and every other, occasion to approve myself your lordship's

Very faithful, obedient servant,

ST. VINCENT.

To Lord Dorchester.

Admiralty, 31st May, 1802.

My Lord,

Soon after I came to this Board, Captain P——r applied to be removed from the Sea Fencibles, and placed in active employment, and he was appointed to the command of the finest sloop of war which was vacant, but in a very short time solicited to retire on half-pay. Under these circumstances, I could not with propriety consider him a candidate for promotion to the rank of Post Captain; otherwise he would most certainly have been included, and I have greatly to lament that any thing should have occurred to disappoint the hopes of an officer in whose fortunes your lordship is so much interested.

I have the honour to be, &c.

ST. VINCENT.*

To George R——s, Esq.

31st May, 1802.

Sir,

On the morning you did me the favour to call here by appointment, I was confined to my bed by severe illness, and I had flattered myself that our long acquaintance would have justified the wish I expressed through Lady N——k. In my private character, I shall be very glad to show any mark of attention to Mr. W——e, on account of the attention he has shown to the interests of my nephews on their Jamaica property, of which I was totally ignorant until I received your letter of the 29th. Mr. W——e was not

* Lord St. Vincent and the subsequent Boards of Admiralty justly considered the Sea Fencibles a perfect sinecure. The wonder is that they had not been long before done away with, and both officers and men sent on *real* service.

called upon by this Board or the commissioners of transports to make any deposition, but conveyed his application through Captain Otway to be allowed to do it, in order to relieve Admiral Sir Hyde Parker from an imprest which was imposed upon him by the late Admiralty Board, for having sanctioned a bill of Mr. O——e's after he had been instructed to discontinue it; and the transport Board being extremely dissatisfied with the manner in which Mr. O——e and those he employed conducted the business relative to the prisoners of war at Jamaica, (the details of which it is not necessary to enter into), I cannot possibly engage in the transaction, which does appear in the most unfavourable light imaginable. Yet, from the reputation of Mr. O——e, and the gentlemen with whom he has been connected in the discharge of the duties of his office, I am not without hopes the lame parts will be cleared up, to their justification and the benefit of the public. At the present nothing can stand worse.

I am, Sir,

Your very obedient,

ST. VINCENT.

To the Rev. Wm. Ward.

June 1st, 1802.

Sir,

I never was more astonished than at the receipt of your letter yesterday, with the enclosure from Mr. —, who has been more favoured than any other man in his line since I came to this Board. His expectation of an advance of pay at a moment that we are making reductions in every quarter, in aid of the public expenditure, and the unreasonable demand he has lately made on the sick and wounded Board for medicines, &c., are features of an alarming nature, which cannot fail of lowering him in the opinion of his superiors if he perseveres in them.

I am, Sir, &c,

ST. VINCENT.

To the Bishop of Durham.

Admiralty, 11th June, 1802.

My Lord,

Every tribute is due from me to the memory of your late excellent brother, Admiral Barrington,* and I must do Lord Spencer the justice to observe that soon after I made known to his lordship the connexion of Captain Brown, he promoted him to the rank of commander, and I cannot express the satisfaction I felt on giving him the other step.

If Mr. Ambrose Cloberry has served five years in the navy, I will with great pleasure place him in a good frigate immediately, otherwise it may be some time before I shall be able to provide for him in the way your lordship wishes.

I have long wished to present a nephew of mine, who is in the church, and has lately been presented to a small living in London, to your lordship. He is grandson to Sir Thomas Parker, late Chief Baron of the Exchequer, an old friend of Mr. Daines Barrington, and I have every reason to believe he is what he ought to be, and worthy your protection.

I have the honour, &c.,

ST. VINCENT.

To Lady Elizabeth Fane.

Admiralty, 29th June, 1802.

My dear Madam,

The patronage of receiving young people into the navy rests entirely with the captain; the Admiralty confining its influence to the extra midshipmen, who

* To the last moment of his life, Lord St. Vincent always entertained a high and grateful respect for the memory of his friend, Admiral Barrington, and had a very great regard for his brother, the Bishop of Durham.

must have served five years to entitle them to be continued in the service. When the captain has got rid of the youth he is now burdened with, he will be able to receive Mr. Curson, but not in a higher situation than boy of the first class. If he rate him midshipman, the commissioners will object at the first payment, and the captain be subjected to censure ; therefore pray do not impose this upon him ; and it is advisable that you should resist all applications of the kind, or our young friend will be embarrassed more than I can describe. I have not yet heard from him, and conclude my letter has been mis-sent.

Believe me, my dear Madam,

Your very faithful,

ST. VINCENT.

To the Marquis Cornwallis.

29th June, 1802.

My Lord,

Your lordship cannot entertain a higher opinion of Captain Cunningham * than he really merits. He is a fair candidate for the office at present filled by Captain Rodney, and should it become vacant I will not be unmindful of him.

I have the honour to be,

My Lord, &c.,

ST. VINCENT.

To J. Sneyd, Esq.

July 7th, 1802.

Sir,

The ill state of health I have been in for a length of time has alone prevented my being punctual in corre-

* My late worthy and excellent friend, Rear-Admiral Sir Charles Cunningham. He was third lieutenant of the Crown, in the East Indies, in 1789.

spondence. I shall have great pleasure in giving employment to your son, and I hope soon to place him first lieutenant of a good frigate. I am extremely sorry to learn that the peace of the county of Stafford is likely to be disturbed by contested elections; the more so as both the county and the borough have been so well represented. The little interest I possess I hope will be directed to the support of the present members; but I cannot presume to express an opinion upon the subject, as it relates to others.

I am, with much esteem, Sir,

Your's &c.,

ST. VINCENT.

To Sir J. Carter.

Rochetts, 14th July, 1802.

My dear Sir,

I take no merit with the Rev. Mr. Griffen, or you, touching the pardon of William Davies; his majesty having been graciously pleased to extend his royal mercy to him before the date of the application. May I request of you to assure Mr. Griffen that I shall always be disposed to attend to his representations, being satisfied, from your description of his character, that he will not willingly make an improper one.

Believe me to be, very sincerely, your's,

ST. VINCENT.

To Sir Evan Nepean.

Rochetts, 1st August, 1802.

My dear Nepean,

Although Lieutenant Kneeshaw cannot claim a gratuity or pension, I have always been of opinion that an officer maimed in the execution of his duty is as much entitled to consideration as a naval seaman; and

the case of Captain Sotheron is a precedent in point, and I have no doubt there are many others besides the lieutenant of the Pallas. I do not cite Captain Graves, because I have heard that the accident, by which he lost his arm, was not, strictly speaking, of this nature ; I therefore wish Mr. Kneeshaw to have comfort administered to him as soon as it can be done.

I have numberless applications for the paymastership of marines at Plymouth. Should Captain Wier be actually dead, the sooner Lieut.-Col. Flight is appointed his successor, (which he has the best claim to for his long and meritorious services under my immediate command) the better.

Your's most truly,
ST. VINCENT.

To ———, *Esq.*

Plymouth Dock, 26th August, 1802.

My dear Sir,

It is totally out of my power to interfere in procuring rated time for your nephew, in the manner you suggest, or indeed to suffer it to be done by any captain, if it comes to my knowledge ; it being contrary to the rules of the service. Nor have I the means of placing him in any ship, as he does not appear to have served the prescribed time (five years), to entitle him to be received an Admiralty mid.

Your's, most truly,
ST. VINCENT.

To Robert Alderson, *Esq.*

Portsmouth, 8th September, 1802.

Sir,

I have long admired the manly and honourable conduct of Mr. Coke, and shall always feel pride in being connected

with him, more particularly when it relates to his advocate. I beg you will offer my best respects and services upon this occasion to Mrs. Alderson ; and,

Believe me to be, Sir, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

To J. Palmer, Esq.

September 8, 1802.

My dear Sir,

Many thanks for the judicious consideration you have shown towards me. Occupied as I am, every interruption tells deep. Should Captain Waller be able to take the command of a frigate, your son shall accompany him ; in the mean while he is making the best of his time.

After dragging through the winter, doubtful of recovery, I am now, thank God, able to transact active business, without suffering materially. I am happy to learn so good an account of Lord Lansdown. I very much doubt whether I shall be able to visit Bath, but am truly sensible of the obliging attention you are disposed to shew me and mine ; and I beg you will rest assured of the regard and esteem with which I truly am,

Your's, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

To Sir Evan Nepean.

Rochester, 13th September, 1802.

My dear Nepean,

Tucker gave me an account of what he communicated to you, but it seemed so improbable, that I did not give it much credit until I received your letter of last night. He says that the person in question was in your room when he left town, and he is confident will come to you again.

Many thanks for the perusal of Mr. Shirley's letter,

which does him great credit ; although, I agree with you, he is liable to much imposition from Perigaud, and others he associates with.

There can be no doubt but the First Consul and Talleyrand listen much to the inventions of the members of opposition now at Paris ; and the Prince of Wales's name is profaned, to answer certain purposes ; for I never can believe his Royal Highness has authorized its being made use of.

I have signed the letter to Commissioner Saxton for the admission of the Russian party into the dock yard, which Mr. Marsden will enclose to you with Mr. Shirley's letter, and a minute touching the American seamen. I am sorry to tell you that Chatham dock yard appears, by what we have seen to-day, a viler sink of corruption than my imagination ever formed. Portsmouth was bad enough, but this beggars all description. I must do Sir William Rule the justice to say, that he assists very much in developing the mystery ; and Sir Andrew Hammond is well disposed to purge the yard of numerous bands of useless hands in all branches.

Your's most truly,
ST. VINCENT.

To Mr. Hurry, Sen.

Sittingbourne, September 19th, 1802.

Dear Sir,

The combination entered into between the caulkers of Chatham and Sheerness, and those in the merchant builders' yards in the Thames, having occasioned the discharge of a number of the former, there is room for a hundred young men in those two yards ; of which I give you the earliest notice that any of the young men of good character who have served their apprenticeships regularly in Yarmouth may profit by this circumstance. They must be under the age of twenty-eight years, and produce their

indentures; and, to accommodate them, a sloop of war or gun-brig shall convey them to Chatham. The caulkers in the King's yards, during peace, work two for one, and have chip-money.

Believe me to be,

Very sincerely your's,

ST. VINCENT.

The following letter refers to an intention which government had of forming a naval establishment at Milford Haven, where we have now a dock and slips. The Rodney, of 90 guns, was built there.

To the Right Hon. C. F. Greville.

Admiralty, 21st October, 1802.

My dear Sir,

I was under the surgeon's hands when you did me the honour to call this morning, and find it absolutely necessary to go out of town to-morrow: I therefore can only acknowledge the receipt of your letter of yesterday's date. The sketch is magnificent, but I fear too vast for a part of the country so little productive, and I do not conceive it probable that any ship of the line will ever resort to it, except by stress of weather or accident. In the latter event, a dock might be useful, yet I have my doubts whether it would be beneficial to the public to fix a large establishment at Milford Haven. I will let you know when I return to town, and I shall be very happy to receive any information upon the subject of your letter.

I have the honour to be,

Very much your's,

ST. VINCENT.

The following letters refer to shameful abuses practised by the non-commissioned officers of the Marines:—

To the Hon. George Villiers, Paymaster of Marines.

October 22, 1802.

Sir,

Many thanks for your obliging letter, and for the manner in which you and your colleagues have acquitted yourselves of your mission. I have read the minutes of proceedings and the report, and I conceive the improper perquisites arising from the staff employments, have been the hotbeds of abuses among the serjeants at head-quarters; and I am clear, that neither the barrack-master, adjutants, quarter-masters, or squad-officers, should receive a farthing beyond the pay of their double commissions.

The members of the Admiralty Board are unfortunately dispersed, or the report would be taken into consideration immediately, with all the attention it merits. I do not discover in the minutes that any of the serjeants were publicans. It is, however, to be greatly lamented, that they were permitted to supply the men with slops, and in some instances to burthen the embarkation list with the scandalous debts arising therefrom. Your quotation from General Loyd's list is very apposite, and I heartily wish I could carry some part of it into effect.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

To Sir E. ———.

4th November, 1802.

My dear Sir,

I have been unfortunately out of the way when Captain I——y has called at the Admiralty, or I should have shown him all the attention in my power. The *Fairy* being ordered to England is a very unpropitious circumstance (though no fault of his). I the more lament it, because I see no prospect of his being employed again for

some time to come, owing to the great number of candidates (to several of whom I am positively engaged), and the very few sloops likely to come forward. Why he should have contracted any debt, or be likely to add to your burthens, I know not. Having fought my way up to where I now stand, without the smallest pecuniary aid from any one, even when I was a mid, I cannot possibly entertain an opinion that officers of this day, whose half-pay is considerably more than formerly, cannot practice the same necessary economy which marked the character of,

My dear Sir,

Your very sincere and obedient servant,

ST. VINCENT.

To Lord Elliott.

Rochetts, 28th October, 1802.

My Lord,

With every disposition to comply with your wishes in favour of Mr. Fox, the public have suffered so materially by the appointments of persons to conduct the business of offices with which they were totally ignorant, the Board is of opinion, that such a responsible situation as the employment of clerk of the rope-yard should not be filled by any one who has not previously served officially in the naval department. I expressed a wish some months ago, that Mr. Fox should endeavour to plant himself in one of the dock yard offices at Plymouth, in order to remove this objection. As matters now stand, the stewardship at Haslar Hospital, very little inferior to the office in question, is the only thing I can appoint him to with propriety, when it becomes vacant.

I have the honour to be,

Your Lordship's, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

CHAPTER VIII.

The renewal of the war — Cunning of Buonaparte — His object in agreeing to the peace of Amiens — Letters to Sir Evan Nepean on the subject of false intelligence — To the same, on various subjects — To the Honourable G. Villiers, respecting the marine forces — To Sir E. Nepean on Le Clerc's army at St. Domingo — To Mr. Villiers — To the same, on secret service money — To the same — To James Duff, Esq. — To Lord Grey de Howick, on public credulity — To J. Fane, Esq. — To Commissioner Coffin — To Sir Evan Nepean, on Captain Wright of Vincejo — A letter to that officer from the mayor of Auray, with remarks thereon — To Mr. Addington — To Sir Evan Nepean — To Commissioners of Transports — To Lord Grey, on applications for active employment — Remarks on an officer who complained of Lord St. Vincent's conduct to him — To Sir Thomas Trigge — To Sir Evan Nepean, on inflicting the punishment of death on a seaman.

WE are now coming at the crisis which Mr. Pitt foretold, and which the Whig, or "Talents" ministry, were unwilling to believe would ever happen. Buonaparte never intended more by the peace of Amiens than to get home his troops and ships, dispersed in different parts of the world, and, having gained these points, he insulted Lord Whitworth, and seized our merchant ships in the ports of France, under the most frivolous pretences; in fact, he showed himself "a bold bad man," with whom an oath

or a promise had no other meaning or object than to answer his own temporary purposes. Still the peace, short and bad as it was, gave us many advantages which we should not otherwise have enjoyed. It taught us to beware of the perfidy of him, who would have made Europe, and even the whole world, "one great prison;" and, under the protection of Divine Providence, it was the British arms and the British press which averted the dire calamity. The loyalty of the people became infinitely more confirmed when they saw that to themselves and the government they must look if they would be free. The truce of Amiens (for it was no more) gave to many of our soldiers and sailors time to breathe, and pass a year with their friends, before the din of war again summoned them to their posts. But the most important of all the advantages it gained for us was, that it enabled the Earl of St. Vincent to establish that immortal Board of Naval Inquiry which shook corruption to its very centre, and would, had it not been put an end to by Parliament, have wrought infinitely more good than it did achieve. But of this more in its proper place.

Well known as are the events to which the following letters refer, they will be found to throw a great light on the causes of those events, as well as on their ultimate results.

To Sir Evan Nepean.

Rochetts, 5th January, 1803.

My dear Nepean,

The paper of intelligence you have sent me carries strong marks of having been fabricated in London, although it may have come from Paris last. Those who have been accustomed to the Channel can alone judge of the importance to be given to it; and whatever directions are given to the Admiralty must be implicitly obeyed. But I think Lord Hobart will, upon reflection, not judge it advisable to move ships of the line from the western ports, without taking the sense of his colleagues upon the measure. Our packets are passing to and fro daily, and every movement at Helvoet may be ascertained in a much more satisfactory manner than by sending frigates to cruize. In short, it appears to me that every part of the measure of precaution contained in your letter is very objectionable, and calculated to do infinite mischief, perhaps to play the game of persons who gamble in our funds, with a thousand &c's. Before the ships now preparing for the Mediterranean are despatched, it may be wise to probe this paper of intelligence to the quick; although as little credit seems to be given to it in town as I feel, sitting in the chimney corner. I cannot bring myself to approve of furnishing any part of the forces voted to the naval service, to other purposes, in the present state of politics. The marines are so essential to effect a sudden equipment, that any diminution of the numbers appears to me of the most serious importance, which I have expressed to Lord Hobart. I have other objections, which most likely have occurred to you.

I have no doubt that *lignum vitæ* to any extent may be procured in the market, and the purchase of that offered by Mr. Taylor, if accepted, must be considered as matter of accommodation to him, and which I think him entitled to,

should his prices appear just, and such as may be agreed upon without material injury to the public.

Your's, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

I have written my opinion of the contents of the box on the back of each.

To Sir Evan Nepean.

Rochetts, January 8th, 1803.

My dear Nepean,

Captain B—— does not appear to have been instructed to send any vessel under his orders to Guernsey for intelligence; and if he has not, I agree with the Board that he should be superseded forthwith, and the reason assigned. I have signed the approval of the sentence of the court-martial of Lieutenant B—— of the Royal Marines, and we cannot do less than transmit to Lieutenant General Innes the observations which follow it; and I think the opinion of Sir P. Stephens entitled to much consideration. Not being well read in the law of evidence, with all my zeal for the support of discipline and good order, I feel a little difficulty about deciding upon the question of placing such a number of officers upon half-pay as are implicated in the business, amongst others, a brother of a lord of sessions in Scotland. It therefore behoves us to be circumspect, and the safe way is to refer the subject to the opinion of the law officers of the crown. I wish Captain Markham would read over the evidence of these gentlemen, and give me his opinion.

The captain of the Bittern is better satisfied with the directions he gave to the master of the Abundance than I am. Both of them showed a want of knowledge and judgment, in not bringing that ship to an anchor, the channel being narrow, the tide rapid, and reef dangerous. This accident certainly strengthens the argument for the appoint-

ment of commanders to those store ships ; but I have no fit person in my eye, therefore submit the nomination of a proper man to the Board. I approve and have signed the memorial for an increase of salary to the clerks of the victualling office at Gibraltar. I am not surprised at Sir Philip's (Stephens's) doubts about the question of increase, but he may be assured that £300 at Gibraltar is not equal to £200 in England, and the office is of great trust. My blood freezes on reading the minutes of the court-martial on the people of the G——. I am of opinion that a charge should be preferred against Captain K——, an order sent out to try him, and I wish the Board to consider whether or not this may not be a more energetic proceeding than the one you have communicated.

Your's most truly,

ST. VINCENT.

To the Hon. George Villiers, Paymaster of Marines.

Rochetts, 13th January, 1808.

Sir,

I am fully sensible of the zeal and ability you have shown in the inquiry into the abuses which exist in the conduct of the royal marines at quarters, and in drawing up a code of instructions to put a stop to them, which I should have had very great pleasure and satisfaction in conferring with you upon, but that, when your report was taken into consideration at the Board, and a proceeding proposed, Sir E. Nepean informed the Board that an arrangement was made between you and him, to draw up additional codes and instructions founded upon the report; and that you were to meet for that purpose on the Sunday following, at his room. I was soon afterwards compelled, by ill health, to retire to this place, and heard nothing further on the subject until a few days ago, when Sir E. Nepean sent me a printed copy of the new instructions, which I returned to him on Tuesday, with a remark or two touching the restraint

I conceive the staff-officers should be subjected to; not to benefit, directly or indirectly, in supplying the men with necessaries, or by any other means whatsoever, excepting what arises out of their additional pay; and that no change shall be made in any part of their dress and accoutrements, at the caprice of the commanding officer, in order that the officers and men of the three divisions may be exactly uniform.

I have not lost sight of the confidential opinion which you gave me of what was necessary to be done to restore good humour, subordination, and proper economy, in the corps; but you must be aware that great caution and circumspection is necessary on my part, from what has happened; and when you hear from Captain Markham, (who, in my absence, will communicate confidentially,) other unaccountable obstacles, you will be the less surprised that stronger and more prompt measures have not been taken to put an end to the shameful litigation at one of the divisions.

I thank you very much for the suggestion touching a judge-advocate; and I rather incline to an opinion that he should be a lawyer of reputation, if such a one can be found who will accept of the employment. Clear I am that another general court-martial cannot, with propriety, be assembled at the division in question, during the present order of things; and I have doubts whether an inquiry should not be made into past proceedings, which Captain Markham will explain to you.

Believe me, with sincere regard, your's, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

To Sir Evan Nepean.

Rochetts, 16th January, 1803.

My dear Nepean,

The reason given for adhering to the words in the original draft are sound and incontrovertible, therefore the sooner you despatch it the better. Should not the

Active, if still at Gibraltar, be directed to join Sir Richard Bickerton, that the evidence of Lieutenant Warwood, and others belonging to her, may be furnished with as little delay as possible?

By the account from St. Domingo, there is good reason to believe the whole French army will meet with the fate of Le Clerc. I have received the enclosed, relating to that abominable delinquent, Mathews, an extract of which should be sent to the Commissioners of the Victualling, and another to the Commissioners of Inquiry, to whom all information should be submitted without delay, and every facility given to their operations.

Your's most truly,
ST. VINCENT.

To the Hon. George Villiers.

21st January, 1803.

Sir,

I return you many thanks for the suggestions contained in your letter of yesterday. I had in contemplation to lay before the King the deplorable state of discipline at Chatham, and was only prevented from having done it some time ago by the mass of it. As much as is sufficient to make his Majesty master of the subject, would, I believe, answer the purpose; and I write to Captain Markham by this post. I adopt your idea of putting the retirement of the officers of the Royal Marines precisely upon the footing of the Artillery.* Their unfitness for service, and not their will, should certainly be the principle of giving them a comfortable retreat.

Captain Kingston did not occur to me when I last wrote to you touching a deputy judge-advocate, or I should not have omitted to mention him; for I am of opinion that a

* This is a reasonable proposition, and worthy of consideration, as long as retirement does not mean disgrace.

thorough knowledge of marine business is a principal ingredient. In all other respects, Mr. Hay appears highly qualified for the situation.

Should the four senior captains make any difficulty about undertaking the business of the squad office, we must make a selection of those most able and willing, which will probably be more beneficial to the public than appointing them by seniority.

I am, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

To Sir Evan Nepean.

Rochetts, 31st January, 1803.

My dear Sir,

I have signed the letter to the Lords of the Treasury, although I wish these sums for secret service, and pensions on the same account, could be paid in some other way; for I have a dread of making myself so accountable for the disbursement of public money. Let me know the nature of the services which have brought these ladies pensioners on the public, and what proof is required of their being in existence. I thank you very much for the language you held relative to Captain Schank's pension, whose letters Mr. Addington has, by his obliging communication, enabled me to answer. It certainly never was in my contemplation to consent to a greater number than fifty marines, officers and non-commissioned officers included. If more soldiers are necessary, I have no doubt that, on the representation of Lieutenant-Colonel Collins to Lord Hobart, they will be furnished by a detachment from some other corps, with officers in proportion, which will answer all the objects of the lieutenant-colonel.

Your's very truly,

ST. VINCENT.

To Sir Evan Nepean.

February 1, 1803.

My dear Nepean,

I have signed the other letter to the Treasury, and send it in the box. It is certainly high time to come to some explanation on the frequent demands for passages in the King's ships, which, however necessary in such a war as the last, is not so now, as merchant ships are sailing weekly to every part of the globe; and I fancy you will find that the expense was originally defrayed out of the army contingencies, and did not fall upon the navy, until some time after the commencement of the late war. As Mr. Trigge and a large suite go with the general, a frigate will not do more than accommodate them. A little conversation between you and General Brownrigg, who is a rational man, will, I have no doubt, put a stop to the facility officers of every description find in obtaining, on application, an order for a passage in his Majesty's ships. In the present state of Gibraltar, perhaps it may be advisable to give way in the instance of Lieutenant-Colonel Dyott.

I can devise no other expedient to reconcile the opinion of the Board upon the increase of allowances to the Victualling Office clerks at Gibraltar, but to put them precisely on a footing with the clerks of the naval offices; for unless their salaries, with that of the master attendant, are increased at the same time, we shall give them ground for clamour. The apprehensions of the Board on the augmentations of the working coopers, I confess, are too well founded; and, for the present, it may be wise to authorize the sixpence an hour extra, when they are employed beyond their usual working hours, and to withhold the additional shilling per diem, recommended by the commissioners. The answer to Admiral Duckworth should be, that, although his Majesty's service will suffer materially by a change of the commanding officer at Jamaica, critically circumstanced as

the adjacent island of St. Domingo is, measures will be taken to comply with his request.

Your's truly,
ST. VINCENT.

*To James Duff, Esq.**

Admiralty, 11th Feb., 1803.

My dear Sir,

I return you many thanks for your obliging note left at Plymouth Dock on your way to Falmouth, and for your letter of the 25th December. I persuade myself that when you consider sincerely the nature of the proposition touching the consulship of San Lucar, you will see it in the light I do. Had the late Mr. Stoner been long in the employment, and had, by eminent services to the public, justified the making a provision for his family, I should have felt very great pleasure in lending my assistance to obtain it; but the contrary being the fact, how can I, or indeed any man who has the smallest principle of feeling for the public, bring forward a measure of the kind? I have a very great regard for Mrs. Cary, and have given the most substantial proofs of it; but I cannot expose myself to the obloquy I must justly incur, were I even to hint a wish of promoting so gross a job as this must appear in the eyes of the world. I rejoice in the reception you have met with at Cadiz, and heartily hope this, and every other happiness, will be long continued to you. I have refreshed Sir Evan Nepean's memory about your disbursements, and I have no doubt he will take care to discharge them.

I am, &c.,

Your's very sincerely,
ST. VINCENT.

* Don Diego Duff, as the Spaniards called him. He was British Consul at Cadiz when I was there in 1809. He was highly respected and beloved by all who knew him.

To Lord Grey de Howick.

March 26, 1803.

My dearest Lord,

I have had no opportunity to speak to Mr. Addington about the Major, and I fear I shall not make much impression; for you may remember that when I applied to him on the subject, he resorted to the commander-in-chief, who undertook to make suitable provision for the serious calamity which befel him, gallantly exerting himself in the field of battle. It is a most lamentable case at his time of life. The flag found on board the French vessel, which was cast away upon Shoreham bar several months ago, turns out to be the colours of the Ligurian republic, a pattern of which is lodged in Lord Hawkesbery's office, having been presented to him by Mr. Otto; and the arms amounted to 2000, instead of 100,000; the rest of the story was invented. The only doubtful circumstance about her real destination was the small quantity of provision on board; but the probability is that she was to touch at one of the western ports of France to victual, and perhaps to take in more cargo. The abominable stories afloat, and the credulity of the people of this town, exceed all former example.* I heartily hope that the malady of the capital, under which I suffer at this moment, will not reach Falkoden; and with every good wish to the whole colony,

Believe me, my dear Lord, &c.,

ST. VINCENT.

To John Fane, Esq.

Admiralty, 11th July, 1803.

My dear Sir,

Many thanks for your communication of Colonel Innes's letter, which, I believe, contains a just statement

* This alludes to the "Rafts," drawings of which were stuck up in the printshops. They were to convey armies of cavalry, infantry, and

of the trick played by the substitutes who offer themselves to the militia, &c. ; but, judging from the very few men raised for the navy in the districts he points out, during the last war, it will not be advantageous to the public to place pressgangs in them ; and I am very sorry to have occasion to observe that the officers already appointed to this necessary, though odious, service,* have received so little aid and protection from the magistrates, that the performance of it has become more difficult and dangerous than ever. We will gladly receive any of the delinquents pointed out by Colonel Innes. The police of the metropolis furnishes us with numbers, and the reward is paid on their delivery at the rendezvous on Tower Hill.

Your's very sincerely,

ST. VINCENT.

To Commissioner Coffin.

August 4, 1803.

Dear Coffin,

Your fair correspondent has deceived herself, or has been deceived by her father, who certainly did assume and *presume* that his son was to be promoted to the rank of post captain, the moment he was made a commander, which I not only discouraged, but found it necessary to clap a stopper over it.

Your's truly,

ST. VINCENT.

artillery, to be propelled by windmills, and to be invulnerable to any attacks by sea. A tunnel under the Straits of Dover, for the passage of an army, would have been equally easy, and would have found as many credulous supporters.

* The noble Earl here forcibly alludes to the odious impress service by which our fleets were manned, or, more correctly speaking, unmanned, during the war, and also to the equally objectionable mode of receiving the refuse of the London vagabonds from our jails.

To Sir Evan Nepean.

Rochetts, 28th August, 1803.

My dear Sir,

Captain Wright * will, I have no doubt, acquit himself well of the business he has undertaken ; but

* This is the officer who fell into the hands of Buonaparte, and was murdered in the Temple, by his orders, in the following year, having been taken in the Vincejo sloop of war, in Quiberon Bay, after a severe action. (See the Naval History of Great Britain, vol. i.)

The following address to Captain Wright being well authenticated, I think it but justice to the memory of that gallant officer to insert it in this place ; for, although it proves nothing against his supposed murderers, it establishes beyond a doubt that he merited kinder treatment from the French Government than he received at their hands. Lord St. Vincent never would believe this gallant but unfortunate officer was murdered in the Temple. I wish *I could not* believe it.

Liberté.

Egalité.

No. Département
du Morbihan.

Auray le 22 floréal, (May, 1804)
au 12 républicain.

Les Maire et Adjoints de la
Ville et Commune d'Auray.

à Monsieur,

*Monsieur Wright, Capitaine de la Corvette
Anglais le Vincejo.*

Nous avons cru qu'il étoit de la Loyauté française de reconnoître dans son ennemi vaincu, l'homme malheureux auquel on doit porter les secours et les consolations que nécessite sa pénible situation ; mais, lorsque nous avons su que celui, forcé de céder, malgré son courage, à la valeur de nos braves, étoit un officier distingué par les principes d'honneur et d'humanité, l'appanage des braves de toutes les nations, nous nous sommes dits, rendons lui un hommage mérité, en lui faisant connoître d'une manière authentique la belle action opérée en faveur de nos concitoyens.

Oui, monsieur, nous n'oublierons jamais que c'est à votre sollicitude bienfaisante que le Citoyen Thevenard, fils du Préfet maritime au Port

it is much too early a stage of it for him to look for promotion. He may have any number of cutters necessary for the performance of it, and be placed in the command of a sloop if he wishes it, and when a frigate is required for his support she shall be furnished. Any two cutters he selects should be ordered into the Downs, with instructions to Rear-Admiral Montagu to place them at his discretion. The twenty-second article of the instructions to the commissioners of Jamaica and Antigua yards appears to me very defective indeed, for there is not a word said on the subject of premiums on bills, which ought to be certified whenever a bill is drawn; much collusive fraud having been practised under the sanction of advertisements.

Your's, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

de l'Orient, et les équipages de deux batimens français condamnés à Rhodes aux Travaux les plus durs, ont obtenu leur élargissement; tout récemment encore en croisière dans nos parages, nous avons appris avec sensibilité que vous avez relâché des pères de familles, des vieillards, et des enfans que le sort des armes avoit fait tomber en votre pouvoir.

Dans les malheurs de la guerre qui désolent les deux nations, il est au moins bien doux, monsieur, d'avoir à citer de tels actes de générosité, et de bienfaisance, qui vous font particulièrement honneur. Recevez en, je vous prie, l'assurance de notre plus entière gratitude.

Nous avons l'honneur de vous saluer.

(Signed)

BONNARD, M.

This letter was presented to me, quite unexpectedly, by Mr. Bonnard, the Mayor of Auray, in presence of Monsieur le Grand, Commissary of Marine, and some other gentlemen of the town, on the evening previous to my departure from that place; and, the more particularly to mark their attention, they accompanied me some distance out of the town, and parted from me with strong expressions of gratitude and affection.

J. W. Wright, captain of
His Majesty's late sloop Vincejo.

To the Right Hon. J. H. Addington.

Admiralty, 2nd September, 1803.

Sir,

Any proposition that comes from you is justly entitled to every consideration I can give it, the more especially when both you and Mr. Adams (for whom I entertain the highest esteem and regard) are interested in the event.

I have always discouraged the plans of concerted resignations of public employments in favour of particular persons, because the service of the public has suffered in an excessive degree by such management; and Mr. R—— C—— not having served long enough in the office he holds to entitle him to a provision from government, some consideration must be made by him to Mr. H——, to induce his resignation; and I am persuaded that you will agree with me that this system of jobbing is big with injury wherever it obtains.

These offices have been filled by pursers since I have presided at this Board, and I am very anxious not to depart from a principle so well founded; at the same time I beg leave to assure you that there is no person existing I would sooner abandon it in favour of than the man recommended by you and Mr. Adams, for I am, with great truth,

Very faithfully your's,

ST. VINCENT.

To Sir Evan Nepean.

Rochetts, 15th September, 1803.

My dear Sir,

I am glad you sent a copy of the public despatches from Sir J. T. Duckworth to Lord Hobart, for

it seems absolutely necessary to give the admiral special instructions for his guidance, touching the conduct to be observed towards the blacks in St. Domingo, and I will be in town early to-morrow morning in order to consult his lordship upon it, and to confer with the Board upon the answer to be given to Lord Hobart's letter respecting the defence of the Frith of Forth.

Very truly your's,

ST. VINCENT.

To Sir Evan Nepean.

Rochetts, 3rd November, 1803.

My dear Sir,

The Board has acted judiciously in directing the squadron before Ferrol to be increased to five ships of the line, and I very much approve the detaching Sir Robert Calder to take charge of the squadron off the coast of Ireland, when Sir Thomas Graves joins Admiral Cornwallis. In the mean time an addition of one or two ships of the line should, in my judgment, be made to the four already there. The despatches from Sir Charles Gordon are truly interesting, and bear marks of authenticity. If the Northern Powers had any sense of dignity, or of their own safety, the discontents in Holland might be turned to good account.

Your's, very truly,

ST. VINCENT.

To the Commissioners of Transport Board.

Rochetts, 2nd November, 1803.

Gentlemen,

The very great attention you have shown to the French General Morgan did, in my judgment,

merit a very different return than an invidious comparison of the treatment of the prisoners in the two countries. It is notorious that Captain Brenton,* his officers and people, were marched into the interior of France, many hundred miles from the spot they were first confined in, with very little aid from the French government, at a grievous expense to the parties. I am persuaded, however, this event will not operate in your minds to the prejudice of General Morgan and his suite, of whom Captain Baynton † has given a very favourable description, such as to entitle them to any alleviations in your power to afford, consistently with the measures you are directed to carry into execution.

I am, gentlemen, &c.,

ST. VINCENT.

To Lord Grey.

Admiralty, 20th November, 1803.

My dear Lord,

I have constantly had the interest of Captain Wolley in view, although it has not been in my power to appoint him to a ship. He deceives himself sadly if he supposes he has lost any thing by the delay; for all those employed are complaining that they are not placed in the wheel of fortune, and your lordship would feel for me if you were in possession of the powerful applications which I receive daily to remove ships from the defence of

* My brother, the present Rear-Admiral Sir Jahleel Brenton, who was taken in *La Minerve*, of 42 guns, July 3rd, 1803, having run aground in a fog, under the batteries of Cherburgh. He was robbed of every article by the French. (See "Naval History.")

† The present Sir William Henry Baynton, who commanded the *Leviathan*, in the celebrated Battle of Trafalgar, and greatly distinguished himself.

the coast to lucrative stations, which, in fact, do not exist ; but prize-money is the order of the day, and all other objects are secondary. The commander-in-chief of the army has not, I believe, controled in any appointment, excepting in the case of Lord Moira ; therefore the removal of Brigadier-General Grey from Ireland to the northern district of England was the act and deed of his royal highness. I have heard it described as a mark of attention to you, but do not recollect by whom. I will endeavour to ascertain the fact, although I am at a loss how to go about it.

Believe me, my dearest General,

Your's sincerely,

ST. VINCENT.

With reference to applications like the above, (of which we have seen so many) I may here state that I once heard an officer complain of the shameful treatment he had received from Lord St. Vincent. "*I only asked* him," said this vain and silly man, "to give me leave to come on shore for six months. [It was war-time, too, be it observed.] I then commanded a frigate. He gave me leave, and when I asked him for a ship, at the end of that time, he appointed me to the * * * ; [a much finer ship, by the way, than he deserved] but where do you think the old * * * sent me to? Why, sir, he sent me to cruize in the North Seas."

Here was a man, evidently a skulker, but one having powerful interest, making a convenience

of the service, and then impudently complaining of being sent to perform the duties of a station which held out to him not only little prospect of emolument, but work he was unable to perform. The same officer told me that he had, the day before, dined with an admiral, in Wimpole Street, where there were twelve naval officers, and not one of them, he assured me, would give Lord St. Vincent a good word. If they were all like my informant, this, I think, was very much to his lordship's honour.

Lord St. Vincent once told me he had friends when he went into the Admiralty, but none when he came out. It could only be accounted for in this way—that the expectations of naval men were raised far above all reasonable proportion, that he was to serve them individually, and give each the price at which he estimated his own services, or the claims of his *borough-monger friends* ; for *they* were counted as good as services against the enemy by many people. Lord St. Vincent thought otherwise, and, having comparatively few things to give away, he was forced to answer many letters and applications with a civil denial. But in this he was not a singular instance. No man in my memory, not even the illustrious Lord High Admiral himself, ever came out of that Board with the same popularity which he carried in ; and, if a first Lord does his duty impartially, he will, like the

King of France, find one ungrateful, and ninety-nine discontented, for every favour he confers.

To Sir Thomas Trigge.

Admiralty, 20th November, 1803.

My dear General, .

I have many apologies to make for not having sooner acknowledged your obliging letter, giving an account of your arrival, and the circumstances attending thereon, of which I have had a minute detail from a certain great personage, who appears very much dissatisfied with his reception here, and has contended that the Code of Regulations he left for the good government of the garrison ought to be strictly adhered to, and with great fairness declared that, should he be ordered to his government, he will enforce them. This does not appear to me a likely means of returning his royal highness to the Rock, where we are all happy to know peace and tranquillity are perfectly restored. This, however, ought not to operate against the return of Lady Trigge and you to England: and I have great satisfaction in having reason to believe that the first good military retreat here will be at your option; and your worthy old friend Sir Wm. Fawcett, I am sorry to find, is likely soon to produce it, he being in a very dangerous way.

Your's very faithfully,

ST. VINCENT.

The following letter refers to an unhappy and most heart-rending subject—that of inflicting the punishment of death on a man for desertion. The observations of his lordship are

just; the crime was never diminished by all the severe and terrible examples made, and nothing ever will answer the purpose but desisting from the practice of impressment, and training up our youth expressly for the service, with a higher degree of cultivation and reward, and a more certain and permanent provision in after life.

To Sir Evan Nepean.

Rochetts, 8th December, 1803.

My dear Sir,

I am glad to learn that Mr. Whidby is ordered to Leth, and when he has finished there he may cross over to Workington, Maryport, and Whitehaven. I agree with the Board that the disorders in the *Penelope* can only be cured radically by putting that ship out of commission. Her crew will go a great way to man the two line-of-battle ships fitting out in the Thames. Captain Cunningham is certainly the fittest person to concert with Lord Keith the means of watering the ships in the Downs with great despatch.

John Morrison, the unfortunate man under sentence of death, having committed the crime he was expressly stationed to prevent, appears to me much more guilty than the person who went off with him. It does not appear by the minutes in what manner he was apprehended; but, had there been any thing favourable to him, he would no doubt have stated it in his defence. I am, therefore, of opinion that the pardoning him might have a bad effect in the present circumstances of the war. I wish, however, that each member of the Board should be called upon for opinion; for I have known instances of *the execution of men for deserting, producing the very contrary effect intended;*

and upon one occasion a whole boat's crew, who were sent to bury a man who was hanged for deserting, *committing the same crime the instant they had performed this last office.*

Your's very truly,
ST. VINCENT.

To Mrs. W——.

Admiralty, 18th December, 1803.

Madam,

I bow with respect to the witty sarcasms you have judged fit to exercise upon me; yet, feeling I have not merited them, I must, in justification, claim the right to state that one of the first acts after I came into office was to employ Captain ——, and afterwards to promote him; which I should have thought might have exempted me from the reproach of overlooking old friends, and a charge of its proceeding from too rapid a flow of honours on,

Madam,

Your very obedient,
ST. VINCENT.

CHAPTER IX.

Motive and object of the institution of the Board of Naval Inquiry—Instance of fraud in a captain of the navy—How punished—Corruption at head quarters—Bribery in the Dock Yards—The shipwrights and their chips—Useless inspection at the dock yard gates—Robberies of copper bolts, &c.—Injury and danger to shipping occasioned thereby—Loss of the York, Blenheim, and others—Provisions and stores—Lord St. Vincent's merits not overrated—Instances of shameful corruption in the East Indies—Admiral Tomlinson's letter to the author of the Naval History—On hospitals at Madras—The same abuses practised in those at home—The Victualling—Prize agency—Scandalous instance in the capture of the Requin—Lord Cochrane's statement in the House of Commons—Transport service another source of borough corruption—Sale of old ships and decayed stores—1st Report, Dock Yard at Jamaica—2nd Report, the chest at Chatham—3rd Report, blocks for the navy—4th Report, Prize agency—5th Report, sixpenny duty—6th Report, Dock Yards—Chips—Repairs of the Amaranthe—Sheerness Yard—Commissioner Coffin—7th Report, Hospitals—8th Report, Cooperage—9th Report, Stores in Plymouth Dock Yard—10th Report, Treasurer of the navy, and Lord Melville's impeachment—His letter to the Commissioners—11th Report, irregular manner of drawing bills by the Navy Board—Secret service money—12th Report, Contracts for hemp and timber—Conclusion of the Reports—Observations—Acquittal of Lord Melville.

LORD St. Vincent, in the course of a long naval and political career, had been, as he used to express it, "let into the secrets of the prison house." His early acquaintance with the base habits of corruption practical by needy men in

his time, enabled him to see very clearly into the system, which, he frequently said in my hearing, would reduce the nation to a state of bankruptcy, unless the perpetrators of these frauds were brought to justice.

A captain in the navy, of very considerable seniority, was prosecuted by his lordship's order in 1803, and being found guilty of signing false returns for fresh beef and other articles, was sentenced to pay a fine and stand in the pillory; and, although this last part of the sentence was, out of respect to the service, remitted, yet he was removed from the list of naval officers, and died, not many years ago, at Havre de Grace.

"You had your hand in the bag, sir, why did you not help yourself?" was the memorable answer made by a corrupt minister in 1783, to a purser who had been a commissary and complained to his lordship of poverty. In short, so deep-rooted was the evil, so profligate and unblushing the system of plunder practised on the careless and credulous public, that little pains were taken to conceal it; nor was it thought any impeachment of moral character to say that a man had enriched himself by such means.

The Herculean task of cleansing this Augean Stable devolved on Earl St. Vincent; for, although Lord Howe set his face against such practices, in passing by an officer in the flag pro-

motion, for having made furniture for his house on board of his ship, yet he never grappled with the Hydra on the grand scale, or brought the whole artillery of the state and the people to bear upon it. He contented himself with setting an example of virtue and honesty, and resigned his office when he found himself unsupported. Lord St. Vincent, on the contrary, had often been heard to declare that if ever he had the power, he certainly would attack, and, if possible, put an end to these scandalous practices; and nobly and faithfully did he redeem his pledge in spite of opposition.

It would scarcely be believed to what an extent peculation was carried on in every public department, but more particularly in all connected with the navy. It was a common expression with the receiving clerks in the dock yards, to say that "they had not been hampered," as a reason for refusing to receive inferior articles into store, when supplied by the contractors. The "hampering" meant a bribe in the shape of a hamper of wine, or some other good thing, as the price of a certificate stating that the merchandize was fit for his Majesty's service, when it was known to be not so. It was notorious, for instance, that our gunpowder was always inferior to that of the enemy, during the war of the American revolution, our shot falling short when their's went over us. I can remember

what the slop clothing was which our seamen were supplied with, and for which the poor fellows were charged an extravagant price ; the contract being always given as a matter of favour, and for electioneering purposes, or procured by a bribe commensurate to the boon. Let it not be supposed that I am exaggerating with a view to magnify the merits of the man who undertook to attack this system. Let the reader turn over the reports of the Commissioners of Naval Inquiry, and he will see that I have not "set down aught in malice ;" on the contrary, I fear I have fallen very far short of describing the thick darkness of corruption which was felt in those days, and the effects of which we are experiencing even now.

The candid reader will perceive that I have barely done an act of duty, by pointing to the leading facts, without giving the names of the delinquents. It will be seen how deeply rooted and how wide spread was the gangrene, which might be compared to the Indian creeper entering insidiously into the interstices of the building, and under the shade and cover of its walls, increasing its growth until it splits and destroys the whole fabric.

Such was the nature and the extent of the disease which our daring and intrepid chief ventured to grapple with ; and, regardless alike of the threats of opposition, or the clamour of

abuse, of spiritual wickedness in high places, he undauntedly pursued his way, dragging the delinquents to light, and holding them up to public ignominy and scorn, however screened or protected.

It would be impossible for any one not well conversant in the ramifications and connexions by which one part of this abominable villany became dependant upon, and supported the other, to conceive the depth and extent of their combinations; so that their motto might appropriately have been, "we stand or fall together."

As First Lord of the Admiralty, Lord St. Vincent's piercing eye struck terror into those foul sinks of iniquity, the dock yards, which came the first under his notice. Then began the howlings, the yells, of the crew who for years had been "*battening*" on the vitals of their country. When these people found that their menaces and abuse were unheeded, they had recourse to tears, to entreaties, to appeals in behalf of large and helpless families, and to former good character. All this Lord St. Vincent was prepared for; and, like Ulysses, he stopped his ears and pursued his way.

Not only were the grossest impositions practiced in the supply of the most important stores, by sending damaged goods, but even the raw materials were again sold or embezzled before they reached their destination.

The shipwrights, who were paid by the day, regularly broke off from their work half an hour before each meal, in order to make up their bundles of chips. This was an old and long-standing abuse, which had been the growth of years; and it was even said that, so much did the labourers value this privilege, nothing would induce them to forego it. Thus had he to struggle and contend against public robbery which had almost grown into a *lex non scripta*; and the very man who had courage to encounter the depredators in their haunts, was by them called "the robber of the poor." Yet, both in his public and private capacity, he was one of the best friends the poor man ever had.

Let the reader fancy, if his imagination can carry him to any thing so revolting, two thousand men leaving off work at half-past eleven o'clock, to make up their bundles of chips! Nor were the chips made in the fair process of their labour, sufficient to satisfy them; they actually employed themselves in cutting up good and serviceable spars, even under the eye of their officers. But this was not all;—these precious bundles contained copper bolts and other valuable articles concealed in them. It is true that these bundles went through a sort of professed examination at the dock yard gates, where a very subordinate officer had an iron rod in his hand, with which he occasionally pierced a

package here and there : to perform the operation on all would (allowing one minute for each) have occupied upwards of thirty-three hours ; and as these were all to be clear of the dock yard and back again to the work in the space of an hour, it need scarcely be said that the examination was nominal and nothing more. When Mr. Colquhoun, in his celebrated police report, stated that the government was plundered, from the dock yards only, at the rate of a million sterling annually, he was supposed to have exceeded all probability. I am convinced, by personal observation and narrow investigation, that the statements which I shall soon offer will satisfy the sceptic that he was under, rather than over, the real sum ; and if the consequences of these frauds are added to the amount of peculation, they will be frightful indeed. The copper bolts used as fastenings for ships building and under repair, met with a ready sale in the marine store shops. The manner in which this branch of villany was carried on is worthy of particular notice, and shows the steps by which the human mind can attain to the very utmost degree of wickedness ;—not to one solitary murder, but to the destruction of whole ships' crews “at one fell swoop.” Every ship was supposed to have a certain number of these bolts driven through her works, in order to secure the fabric well together. Some of them are two feet long ; others,

through the stem and breast-hooks, or bows of the ship, and about the stern post and near the rudder, much longer ; their diameter about one inch and three quarters. It is the most important part of the duty of the master builder and his confidential assistants to see that these bolts are driven effectually into their proper places ; but, in order to deceive or elude the vigilance of the inspectors, the wretches contrived what they called "a Devil bolt." These were neither more nor less than the heads and tails of bolts, about two inches long, cut off and placed where the builder supposed the entire bolt to have gone through, the intermediate part being filled up with a wooden plug or *trenail*, whilst the head on the outside, and the tail forelocked within, gave the deceitful promise of security. Thus was the ship deprived of her most effectual fastening, and the diabolical act was only discovered when perhaps there was no remedy.

It is probable the loss of the York of 64 guns, in the North Seas, and the Blenheim, 74, in the East Indies, was owing solely to this practice : and the Albion of 74 guns we know to have been very nearly the victim to this foul and hellish fraud. That ship had been sent out to India quite new. She was one of what we used to call "the forty thieves" (that number of ships of the line having been built by contract in the merchants' yards, and found wanting in almost every

good quality). After being on service about three years, this ship proved so loose and defective that she was ordered home, and had nearly foundered on her passage; and on being taken into dock it was discovered that her weakness was owing to the number of these "devils," which had been put into her when building.

The next great consideration to the seeing a ship properly secured in her fastenings, is to have her provisions and stores of a good and sufficient quality; to see that our naval hospitals are attended by the most skilful men, and the sick supplied with every comfort which they would require and deserve from a grateful country; and that our prizes taken from the enemy are honestly sold and fairly distributed to the captors. All these, and many other equally grave and important considerations, occupied the attention of Lord St. Vincent and his able coadjutors, Trowbridge, Markham, Fanshawe, Coffin, and the Tuckers (Benjamin and Joseph.)*

If, then, I shall have made out my case, and proved the abuses which Lord St. Vincent had to contend against, and which he in a great measure finally subdued, I shall have established his claim to the title of "Great." In

* The former his secretary; the latter, a builder in a merchant's yard, and by Lord St. Vincent removed into one belonging to the crown.

fact, his victories over the monster Corruption, on shore, exceeded in their beneficial results every thing that was ever achieved at sea, by himself or any other admiral whose deeds are recorded in the history of our country.

In order to show how the disorder had spread from the parent state to its most remote possessions, I need only mention the enormous fortunes which were amassed by the government contractors, prize-agents, and secretaries of the commander-in-chief, in what are falsely called "the good old times."

I copy the following from the communication of a gallant veteran now living—Rear-Admiral Tomlinson.

"As there are but three officers that I know of besides myself remaining who served in the East Indies, under Sir Edward Hughes, I take this opportunity to bear witness to the truth and justice of the remarks made in your 'Naval History,' vol. i. p. 200, relative to the shameful neglect of the sick and wounded seamen at Madras Hospital, at that time more like bullock sheds than an hospital; the supplying of bad provisions to the fleet, and the speculation carried on by the furnishing the ships with provisions which had been condemned as unfit for use" [on board of other ships].

"Being first lieutenant and commanding officer when some of this provision was sent on board the

Bristol, I ordered a survey to be held on it, agreeable to the 16th article of the printed instructions under the head of 'provisions;' for which I was ordered on shore to the admiral's house at Madras, where I was threatened with a court-martial. The admiral and his secretary, Cuthbert, began their lecture, four or five captains being present. I justified my conduct by observing that the 16th article was meant to prevent bad provisions being received from contractors as good, and charged to government as such. This had the effect of raising their ire, and I was told to prepare for a court-martial, for daring to order a survey in the presence of the commander-in-chief. The late Sir Andrew Mitchell, thinking, I suppose, that my defence was good, took the Naval Instructions from Mr. Cuthbert, and read the 16th article, which, in the old instructions in use in that day, is as follows :

“ ‘No provisions sent off for the supply of His Majesty's ships shall be refused on pretence of their being old and unfit for keeping, unless there shall be a reasonable ground to object to such provisions, and, in that case, the captain or *commanding officer* shall first cause the same to be surveyed by the proper officers, who are faithfully to report to him under their hands the condition thereof, and if the said provisions shall then appear to be unfit for the use of the ship, he is to return them to

the officer of the victualling who sent them off, together with the original survey, for his justification.'

"I was then," continues Admiral Tomlinson, "dismissed, under an impression that I was to be tried forthwith; but the affair ended there, and I believe it had the effect of checking these abuses, as they were too bad to bear investigation before an open court.

"The master of the Bristol was one of those you speak of, as employed to condemn all stores put before him for that purpose. [Condemned on board of one ship, they were either removed to another, and supplied as fresh and good, or left on board the original ship, the government being invariably charged with them as new, and they were paid for accordingly]. He was formerly a common sailor, and spoke of the job as a good thing, as he had so many rupees a-day, and good quarters at the store-keeper's house. What follows will show the wretched state of the poor fellows in Madras Hospital.

"Soon after the last action with the French fleet, I observed a wounded seaman, who had lost part of his hand by a shot, climbing up the side with one hand, and holding his bread bag in his teeth. I asked why he had left the hospital? He answered, they were so much in want of provisions that he had come

on board to beg some biscuit [which was full of maggots] from his messmates. At that time I understood government was charged a rupee a-day for every man in the hospital, (1000 or 1500), but I believe seven or eight pence was all it cost the contractor for their provisions, and it was reported that he was obliged to share the profits with the admiral and his secretary, said to amount to about £70 a-day."

The same nefarious system under which the hospitals were conducted abroad, was practised, though in a more guarded, and, perhaps, less flagitious manner, at home. No wonder, then, that the name of a contractor became synonymous with that of rogue—no wonder that men like Cuthbert returned from India with enormous fortunes, acquired by the most shameful of all robberies,—that of cheating a sick or a wounded seamen out of the comforts, nay, even the necessities of life provided by a grateful country for his solace and cure.

The victualling establishment at home was not less corrupt than any other department; and the charge of sick and wounded prisoners of war, although confided in the first instance to men of probity and honour, fell, in its administration, into the hands of a set of villains, whose seared consciences were proof against the silent but eloquent pleadings of a

fellow-creature, *sick and imprisoned for no crime*, in a foreign land, far away from friends and relatives.

The frauds in the prize-agency department required a keen and searching probe. Much was brought to light, and much more was concealed, or known only to a few.

The case of the *Requin* (Shark), a prize taken by the Channel fleet, was one which should have excited more general indignation. Here we find the admirals receiving their shares, while the remainder, to the captains, officers, and seamen, being thought too trivial for distribution, but amounting to £1500, was left in the hands of the agent for seven years, under the plea that it would not pay for the expense of making out prize-lists.

Lord Cochrane made a statement of some facts to this effect in the House of Commons, but he might have gone much further. The proctor's bill for a prize taken by the *Spartan*, when my brother commanded her, was £1025, and when refused payment and taxed, was reduced to £285. These facts will prove what Lord St. Vincent had to do, and the following extracts will show how he did it.

In the first edition of the "Naval History" I have commented pretty strongly on the abandoned and profligate system of hired vessels and transports. In this the borough influence

reigned paramount, and the most solid information was disregarded, when the perpetrator of the greatest fraud was denounced, provided the principal was a supporter of government.

A ship, purchased by a man of influence for £4000 or £5000, was a certain fortune to him. He cleared his money in the first year, by letting her out to the government, at the rate of £400 per month ; and latterly, if coppered, at £7500 per annum. After having conveyed a body of troops to their destination, they were allowed to remain for months in harbour, without wear and tear, keeping our best seamen in idleness, to the disgust and discontent of those in the king's service, who had not a third part of their wages for ten times the labour.

The energetic and quick-sighted St. Vincent was almost unequal to *this* stronghold of corruption, the outworks of which were to be found in the rotten boroughs ; and the abuse remained uncured, for years after he went out of office.

I saw some instances myself of these infamous transactions, and I am informed, from good authority, that about twenty coppered transports, near the end of the war, were lying for three years in the harbour of Messina, seldom employed in any duty, but held in readiness to embark troops. From April, 1807, to the latter end of May, 1810, these vessels were only once

out of the harbour, and that for a short voyage to convey the army from Sicily to Ischia, in the Bay of Naples. How long these vessels had been stationary in Messina before that period, or how long they remained afterwards, my informant did not know.

With respect to the 10th report of the naval inquiry, on which the impeachment and celebrated trial of Lord Melville was founded, little need be said by way of comment. His lordship was acquitted of all the charges, by a large majority of the peers. Of the secret service money we shall speak presently.

It was said that Lord St. Vincent had reduced the navy to a very low ebb, by the sale of ships and stores. The fact is that the ships and stores which he sold were unfit for the naval service, and therefore the disposal of them was a manifest benefit to the state. But the first lord of the Admiralty had enemies, not only to himself but to the state, under the same roof with him, in the office at Charing Cross. When *secret* orders were sent down to Deal to impress from all protections, when the troops were called out at midnight and surrounded the town, and when the boats of the squadron landed at the same time, not a seaman was found; only seven landsmen were taken, and one of these was the postillion who had driven a captain in that night to join his ship. A friend

of mine observed the next day to Lord St. Vincent at the Admiralty, that the boatmen must have got information of the intended movements, from some good authority:—"I will tell you, sir," said his lordship, "where they got it from—it was from this house."

In the first report of the Commissioners of Naval Inquiry, we find the dock yard at Port Royal, in Jamaica, is the place where the scene of peculation first begins to unfold itself. Here it appears that in eight years the government had, at the lowest rate of calculating the exchange, sustained a loss of £53,625 in the negotiation of bills only; and this was but a small part of the injury caused by a combination of fraud and neglect in the agents abroad and the public boards at home.

Of the naval stores, which, when purchased in England and sent out by the Navy Board, cost £941, the same quantity and quality purchased in Jamaica cost £4,968; and this difference, making every allowance for freight, was enormous. It was calculated (1st Report, p. 16) that in three years the government lost £134,557, only because the store-keepers, having an interest in the purchase abroad, would not send in their demands in time, in order that they might be supplied from home; and when the merchant found out the pressing wants of the ships, he naturally laid on a heavy advance on his

prices. From that time things became better managed at home, and the government took the profit of exchange into the national coffers, instead of allowing it to go into the pockets of corrupt officers. Well, indeed, might Lord St. Vincent say that "the dock yards stank of corruption," and the foreign ones, if possible, were worse than those at home. The criminal neglect of laying by the public accounts of these establishments until the unaudited amount reached to more than a million sterling, was productive of incalculable loss and confusion.

As soon as these transactions respecting bills of exchange and stores became fully known at home, (which was as early as 1796-7), the commanders-in-chief on the Jamaica and other stations were furnished with copies of all instructions by which the dock yard officers were guided.

To give one instance how the government was defrauded, we shall state that Rear Admiral William Parker* desired the naval store-keeper at Jamaica to give notice, by advertisement, that £4000 was wanted for the service of the government; and it might then have been had at very great advantage, as he (the admiral) had that day been offered £15 per cent. for a draft of his own. The store-keeper replied that he could not give such notice, there being

* Who commanded the Audacious, in the affair of the 28th of May, 1794.

a person in Kingston who always supplied him with money when he wanted it, and that it had always been customary to give government credit at £140 per cent. If any advantage was obtained by the premium, it belonged to the store-keeper, who also sustained the loss, should any be incurred. On this single transaction the store-keeper was to have pocketed the sum of £ 600!

Such was the state of things previously to Lord St. Vincent coming into office. The late Rear Admiral Sir Wm. Parker, Vice Admiral Sir Hyde Parker, Rear Admiral Richard Rodney Bligh, and Vice Admiral Lord Hugh Seymour, who were all successively commanders-in-chief on the Jamaica station between 1795 and 1802, had each a share in detecting some of these abuses.

When Lord St. Vincent came into office, in 1801, he immediately saw what was wanting. Having the foregoing and many other facts of a similar nature laid on the table of the Admiralty, the course to be pursued with regard to the West Indies was clear and obvious. It would be useless and unfair to the surviving families of the defaulters to say more on that subject. Suffice it that a remedy was applied, and it is hoped one that proved effectual. Still constant inspection is required; and the most vigilant officer that can be sent upon that sta-

tion will find himself outwitted, unless he keeps a watchful eye on the civil department.

The 2nd report relates to the Chest of Chatham, so called at that time, but afterwards removed to Greenwich, and then to the Navy Office at Somerset House, where it is likely to remain.

The original written constitution of "the Chest" is supposed to have been lost during the usurpation of Cromwell. It had before that been restored and established by an order in council of Queen Elizabeth, in 1590. This was the origin of the fund called the Chest of Chatham, which was supported, first by a contribution of sixpence, fourpence, and twopence from each seaman and apprentice, according to the amount of his wages.

Charles the Second added twelve acres of marsh land near Rochester, called the Delce; and it appears by the records that, previously to 1672, the funds were increased by fourpences and twopences deducted from the wages of all seamen, for the payment of chaplains and surgeons in the royal navy; and this extended to such ships as carried neither one nor the other. In 1688, King James the Second added the fines and mulcts imposed by naval courts-martial. About this time the shipwrights were excluded from the benefit of the fund to which they no longer contributed, having formed a similar institution exclusively for themselves.

It is curious to remark how every act of kindness conferred on the wounded sailor was accompanied by some burdensome restriction, which almost neutralized the boon, and in many instances rendered it either unattainable or unworthy of the trouble of looking after. Thus, whatever might be the distance of a poor man's abode, whether the Shetland and Orkney islands or the north of Ireland, they were compelled at stated periods to appear before the commissioners of the Chest, in order to prove that their wounds were uncured or incurable; blindness, and some obviously disqualifying wounds, alone exempting them from this penalty; and even the loss of a limb was not deemed sufficient excuse for non-attendance.

As soon as Lord St. Vincent and the Admiralty had it in their power, a remedy was applied, and the evil no longer exists. Periodical surveys are still held on such as have any prospect of recovery from the effects of their injuries.

But here the most scandalous frauds were brought to light by the commissioners; for, after all the fatigue and expence of their long journeys to be inspected, the poor fellows rarely received the amount of their smart money, or even any portion of it. They had fallen into the hands of low publicans and slop-sellers, who had either kept them in a state of intoxication,

and obtained their powers of attorney, or else they had given them clothes upon credit, and the exorbitant prices could scarcely be paid by the whole sum they were to receive at the payable. Of five thousand two hundred and five pensions, only three hundred and nine were paid to the claimants in person; the others were seized by what the sailors called the "Land Sharks," whilst the rightful owners were either kept drunk in the public houses, or threatened with being thrown into prison if they appeared in the town. The wise and benevolent regulation of causing them to be paid at the places of their abode, by the nearest officer of excise or customs, has completely put an end to this evil.

The 3rd report relates to the contract for supplying the navy with blocks, capstan-bars, handspikes, and pump-brakes. But this contract, which, until 1802, had for some time previously been held by Messrs. Taylor and Son, of Southampton, was entirely given up; and the celebrated block machinery, established by Lord St. Vincent, in Portsmouth dock yard, does honour to his discernment, as well as to the ingenuity of Mr. Brunell, the inventor.

The same report also embraces the cooperage at Deptford, where it appeared that for one piece of work performed, the sum of £1020 10s. 5d. was charged, where the actual amount was

proved to have been no more than £37 2s. 3d. In another case, £2650 18s. 9d. was charged for what really cost no more than £227 4s. 9d.

In supplying wooden hoops, formerly used in the navy to go round the lower masts, above and below the wouldings—a rope with which they were bound together—it appeared that in the fitting five ships, seven hundred and twenty hoops had been charged, and only one hundred and ninety-two received. Wood hoops are no longer used, the lower masts and bowsprits being now more effectually bound together and secured by iron hoops only, without wouldings.*

The 4th report relates to prize agency. Many great and flagrant frauds and abuses were brought to light in this department. The ignorant, the unwary, and the careless seamen, and extending as high as the wardroom officers, were defrauded of their just rights by the most scandalous delays and evasions. The want of a prize-list from any one of the capturing ships out of a fleet, would delay the payment for six or seven years. Sometimes the prize was too inconsiderable to go to the expence of a distribution, and then the agent would keep the money in his hands for seven years. This was the case with the *Requin* (Shark), taken by the Channel fleet, and before referred to, where the commander-in-chief, who had appointed his

* I find no such word in Johnson.

secretary to be the agent, received his own share, and the junior admirals their's; but the distribution went no lower, because the sum of £1500 was too small to distribute, and the agent kept it in his own hands for the period I have stated.

The commissioners suggested the establishment of a general prize agency office, which would have left sufficient employment to the honest and respectable class of prize-agents, who would still have had all the detail duties to perform, paying the proceeds of sales into the central office as soon as they were effected. The plan is well and ably given in the 4th report, p. 267. One observation of the commissioners is worthy of great attention, namely, that they did not think it necessary to offer any apology to the agents for proposing to take from them the use of the prize-money pending the appeals; *that* never having been reckoned among their authorised emoluments, as it sets their interest in direct opposition to their duty.

Nos. 14, 15, 16, and 18 of this report are deserving of notice. The observations of Lord Nelson are valuable in themselves, and they deserve infinite weight as coming from such a man. Mr. Beddingfield, p. 325, says he has known 10s. 6d. in the pound charged by the [low class of] agents for receiving prize money;

but he adds, by way of consolation, that the man who was guilty of this extortion was afterwards hanged for forgery.

In all cases like the Requin, where the agent finds the sum will not pay the expences of distribution, it should go at once into Greenwich Hospital, for the use of the widows of seamen and marines who die in that establishment.

The fifth report relates to the collection of the sixpenny duty for Greenwich Hospital. But, as that supply has been taken away by a recent act of parliament, under a plea, that the merchants would provide for their own seamen, I have only to add, that, in the opinion of every naval officer, it was a very unwise measure.

The sixth report relates to the dock yards in the United Kingdom, in which a want of regularity and discipline, and a shameful system of plunder, had so long existed, that nothing but the giant arm of the great and real reformer could ever have attempted a cure.

Plymouth dock, or Devonport, as it is now called, came first under inspection. It was established in 1691, at which time the officers and shipwrights were borne on board of a ship of war, fitted purposely for their reception, and they were superintended by a naval captain.

It was here that the practice of taking chips out of the yard was first attempted to be stopped; and Commissioner Fanshawe, who

had as much energy as most men of his time, had great difficulty in preserving a due subordination when the order was promulgated. Sir Isaac Coffin, at Sheerness, found the same sort of opposition on this occasion ; with the additional odium of turning the dock yard men out of those dens of infamy, " the old ships."

The vessels I can remember very well in the year 1782, and much later ; they were worn out line-of-battle ships, and hauled on shore in the shingle, where the sea wall of the dock yard now stands. They were sunk as high as their bends in the gravel, and divided within into cabins and various apartments for the inmates ; without, they were covered with pigeon-houses, wash-houses, galleries, smoking-shops, and every variety of erection which the fancy of the ship carpenters could suggest and complete in their leisure hours. This was just the sort of field in which the active habits of Coffin found employment to delight him ; and Lord St. Vincent knew when he sent him there that he was the man fitted to cope with them. There was no species of infamy unpractised on board of these vile ships ; murders and every other crime, I fear, not excepted. Coffin gave them notice to quit in 1802, and had nearly lost his life by it. He happened, however, to be a very strong and powerful man, and usually carried a heavy stick, with which he kept the ruffians

at bay until a guard came to his relief; otherwise he would probably have been thrown over the ramparts into the ditch. But he succeeded in expelling them from their haunts, and the old ships were broken in pieces by the very men who had been born and brought up in them*.

It was calculated that the time lost in mustering the workmen at Portsmouth, calling their number (2,190), and allowing only half an hour for each muster, morning and noon, *amounted to the labour of 34,290 men for one day*, and the value of that labour, taking the average at 3s. each, was £5,143 10s.

The workmen were found, also, to evade their work, and paid certain fees to the clerks; such was, at least, the only means of accounting for the impunity with which they escaped. We have seen that bribes, in the shape of hampers of wine, ale, or porter, were liberally supplied to the inspectors of timber; and, I conclude, the same treatment was applied, with equal success, to the mustering clerks of the dock yard gates.

In 1802, the wages of the workmen in the dock yards amounted to £581,621, and yet the

* Coffin was always a great humorist, and the shipwrights, by way of revenge, caricatured him in chalk on the dock yard gates, where he was represented as the devil's darling, dandled on the knees of Satan. It was exceedingly well done as far as the likeness of one of the party was concerned, and Coffin had a man from town on purpose to copy it, and then placed it in his office. He was never caricatured any more after this.

commissioners of the navy allowed these vast sums to be disbursed on the bare certificate of a muster clerk, whose established mode of reporting "present or absent" on the muster roll, was by a line, thus —, in the former, and two dots, thus .. in the latter. The dots were easily connected into lines when occasion required, and "absent" was made "present."

From the foregoing facts it may be fairly inferred that the dock yards of the kingdom were among the most fruitful sources of corruption, plunder, and national ruin.

In the volume of reports for the year 1804, p. 34, it appears that, in three years, viz., between the 12th of November, 1798, and the 12th of October, 1801, the public had sustained a loss of £68,330, by the labourers having been paid that much above the value of their labour.

In 1783 job-work was established for the repairing of the ships of war and boats, &c. ; and, in 1788, after great opposition on the part of the workmen, task-work was introduced into the ship-building department. By this arrangement it was found that the shipwrights could earn from 4s. 2d. to 6s. 6d. per day, the lowest sum being twice as much as their former daily pay ; and yet the government was gainer by the additional pay, in the greater quantity of work performed in a given time.

To mention the minor instances of fraud,

ignorance, and neglect, in these departments, would be tedious and useless to the general reader.

The purchase, and subsequent repair and commissioning of the *Amaranthe*, a Dutch frigate of 20 guns, at Woolwich, must be mentioned as a farther illustration of defects of the system in the late war. This vessel had been one of the prizes taken at the Helder in 1799, by the fleet under the command of the late Sir Andrew Mitchell. Having been surveyed at Woolwich, she was declared, by the officers of that establishment, to be fit for his Majesty's service. She was consequently purchased for the sum of £2,241, exclusively of her guns and stores. She was then taken into dock, and underwent what the builders at that dock yard, and the surveyors of the navy, were pleased to call a thorough repair. She was commissioned in 1803, and the command of her conferred on the late Captain C. Worsley Boys. As soon as she reached the Downs, it was discovered that her copper alone prevented her sinking. Not a moment was lost ; she was ordered up to Sheerness, where her defects were found so much more extensive than they had been supposed, that she was sent back to Woolwich, where it was proved that the master builder had *omitted to survey the bottom of the vessel, on which they had put new decks and topsides ; at*

the expence of £13,070, including the original purchase-money. The master-builder had died before the discovery took place. A new ship, of equal dimensions, might have been built in England for half the money.

The Seventh Report relates to the hospitals, beginning with that of Stonehouse, at Devonport. Here was discovered waste, corruption, fraud, extravagance, neglect, and villany, to a shameful and disgusting extent. Four thousand gallons of porter were consumed in six months, being more than four times the relative proportion between that hospital and Haslar, near Gosport. On board the *Caton*, a Ponton ship, appropriated for sick prisoners of war, it was discovered that the surgeon's chief assistant kept a table for the officers, at the cost of from £1500 to £2000 per annum. He could even afford to allow the purser one hundred guineas a year, in lieu of his share of the profit of the concern.

The Board for the care of Sick and Wounded Seamen was partly chargeable with this fraud, not by connivance, but by neglect of-duty ; the worst and most scandalous feature of which was, that while the wretches in the ward-room were rioting in luxury, they were actually consuming those very articles, which the government had liberally supplied for the use of the sick prisoners of war.

The Eighth Report relates to the cooperage department at Plymouth, and here facts the most scandalous were brought to light. The King's casks were stolen, and the broad arrow cut out of them; and many were found, in which even this precaution had not been taken. Sixty-four butts were detected in one brewery, filled with porter, and ready to be sent out to customers. The delinquents were summoned, convicted, and fined forty shillings! The law was appealed to for farther redress; but the grand jury ignored the bill, where fraud was proved. Many a poor child have I seen committed to Newgate and Coldbath-fields, for stealing a pewter-pot or a pocket-handkerchief. I cannot therefore reconcile it to my ideas of justice, that frauds of so much greater magnitude, and committed by men who had not the excuse of youth and ignorance to plead, should have gone unpunished. That little rogues are caught in the meshes of the law, while great ones escape, is a proposition clearly illustrated, by comparing the Reports of the Commissioners of Naval Inquiry with those of the Old Bailey.

The Ninth Report relates to the receipt and expenditure of stores in Plymouth dock yard, in which, though there were some things to reprobate, there was less appearance of fraud and collusion than in any other department.

The Tenth Report will be long memorable in

the annals of the British empire, as having been the cause of the impeachment of Lord Melville, as treasurer of the navy; an office which his lordship, previous to his elevation to the peerage, had held from the year 1786 to 1800. This Report involved a correspondence, and the investigation of a complicated mass of public accounts, enough, one would think, to appal even a vigorous understanding. The Commissioners, however, went into it, and in the course of their investigation summoned before them the Lords Melville, Spencer, and St. Vincent. The investigation, though painful in its operation to Lord Melville, tended ultimately to his advantage, he having been honourably acquitted, by a vast majority of his peers, of all the charges brought against him. In the course of this laborious investigation many important facts were brought to light, and more improved methods of regulating the issuing of moneys from the Bank, towards the support of the naval service, were adopted. It did not appear that any defalcation was discovered in the accounts of the treasurer or his paymaster, Mr. Trotter; who stated, that, during the time he had held office under Lord Melville (then the Right Honourable Henry Dundas), the sum of £134,000,000 had passed through his hands, of which not one penny remained, except £605,

which he had accounted for to the Navy Board, as an official error.

I here give Lord Melville's letter to the Commissioners at full length, with their remarks upon it, as it led ultimately to his lordship's impeachment:—

Wimbledon, 30th June, 1804½

Gentlemen,

I have received your requisition of the date of the 26th instant. It is impossible for me to furnish you with the account you ask. It is more than four years since I left the office of Treasurer of the Navy, and at the period of doing so, having accounted for every sum impressed into my hands, I have paid the whole existing balance into the hands of my successor. From that time I never considered any one paper or voucher that remained in my hands as of the smallest use to myself or any other person, and consequently, being often in the practice, since I retired to Scotland, of employing, occasionally, some time in assorting my papers, and destroying those that were useless, I am satisfied there does not exist any one material by which I could make up such an account as you specify. But, independently of that circumstance, I think it right to remind you, that during a great part of the time I was Treasurer of the Navy I held other very confidential situations in government, and was intimately connected with others. So situated, I did not decline giving occasional accommodation from the funds in the Treasurer's hands, to other sources not connected with my official situation as Treasurer of the Navy. If I had materials to make up such an account as you require, I could not do so without disclosing delicate

and confidential transactions of government, which my duty to the public must have restrained me from revealing.

(Signed) MELVILLE.

The above letter, together with the determination on the part of Lord Melville, and his paymaster, to avail themselves of the fifth clause of the act, by which the commission was constituted, and which prevents their criminalizing themselves, seemed to present an insuperable bar to farther investigation; but the Commissioners observe, "that however the apprehension of disclosing delicate and confidential transactions of the government might operate with Lord Melville in withholding information respecting advances to other departments, we do not see how that apprehension can at all account for his refusing to state, whether he derived any profit or advantage from the use or employment of money issued for the services of the navy" (p. 41). On this letter, it appears, the whole of the subsequent proceedings against his lordship were founded.

The Eleventh Report relates entirely to an irregular mode of drawing bills, which had been resorted to by the Navy Board for the purpose of raising money; and although it did not appear that the public had sustained any loss by the transaction, it was an improper and unconstitutional mode of procuring money, which might

have been drawn into bad precedent, and produced serious results. It was, therefore, discontinued.

The secret service money, before referred to, was not passed over without very severe scrutiny on the part of the Commissioners; and it is a fact not less remarkable than true, that both Lord St. Vincent and Lord Spencer were summoned before the Board, to give an account of the appropriation of some portion, at least, of this fund, the sum of £100,000 having been issued, in navy bills, for secret *naval* services, between the 4th October, 1799, and the 9th April, 1801.

On examining these noble lords, they both of them declared that they were entirely ignorant of the fact, or to what purpose the sum was supposed to have been applied, and the affair appears to have been conducted between the Treasury and the Navy Board.

This fact presents a most extraordinary anomaly in the conducting of the public business of the country. Two noblemen of the highest talent, selected to be placed at the head of our profession, as the fittest men to be found in the state, members of the privy council, advisers of the crown, and high in its confidence; yet the Treasury passes by them, to come at their subordinates to whom it confides these important secrets. *Lord Spencer and Lord St. Vincent*

both made oath that they were entirely ignorant of the whole transaction !

The Twelfth Report relates to the purchase of hemp and masts at Riga, for the use of his Majesty's navy. These articles had, till then, been supplied by contract ; but whether the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, or the Navy Board, had reason to suppose that the contractors were not honest in their dealings, or whether they thought they could enable the public to pocket the profits of the contractor, and at the same time obtain a better article, we shall not stop to inquire. Government had been informed, in the year 1795, that the French were buying hemp at Riga, and an agent was despatched, on the part of the Navy Board, to make purchases, and keep the enemy out of the market. This measure, as might have been foreseen, had no other effect than raising the price of the article in the foreign market ; putting a large profit into the pocket of Mr. Andrew Lindegreen—who certainly appears to have done his best for his employers, but was outwitted ; and it is well known, that our enemies were as well supplied with naval stores as before the new agency was established. But there was one great inconvenience, and certain loss, accruing to government, besides Mr. Lindegreen's 5 per cent. on all purchases—namely, that whereas all goods sent into the dock yards

by contractors were, necessarily, most carefully inspected, and if found defective turned back upon the hands of the dealer; but with Mr. Lindegreen it was not so, the government being forced to accept of all the purchases of its agent, be they what they might; and a vast quantity of damaged hemp was, in consequence, received into the stores of the naval arsenals. Nor was any blame imputable to the agent, he having satisfactorily proved that he had purchased the best article, and shipped it in good condition, but was not answerable for the sea-risk or damage by the voyage.

In the importation of masts and spars the government derived no sort of advantage, and the Commissioners seem to have lost all patience, when they exclaim (p. 33), "So much has been said on the employment of Mr. Lindegreen, and of the additional expence which was thereby incurred, that we think it unnecessary to say any thing farther here, than that we are of opinion no advantage was gained that might not have been expected from the employment of any established house in the Russian trade." I suspect the public will be of the same opinion when they are informed, that Mr. Lindegreen was allowed $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. by the Navy Board on the purchase of hemp; and he candidly and honestly admits, that merely writing the letter to Messrs. Thorley, Morison, and Company, was

all the service he performed for the sum of £3550 18s. 2d.

It would appear quite superfluous to go beyond this, in order to establish the justice of Earl St. Vincent's remarks, and his measures founded on them, "that our dock yards stank of corruption."

In a Supplementary Report, the Commissioners exculpate themselves from the charge of giving garbled statements, or of having stated things not founded in fact; charges which were put forward against them by the Navy Board, in a memorial to government.

There is also a very able letter from the late Lord Melville to the Commissioners, explanatory of part of his conduct with respect to his public and private accounts with Mr. Trotter; but, as it reached the Commissioners after the inquiry had closed, and their Report had been laid before the three branches of the legislature, they did not feel themselves competent to reopen the subject, without authority from the same source.

Thus ended one of the most able, acute, and laborious investigations, which was ever undertaken and completed in this or any other country. Its vast utility will never be denied: it shook corruption to its very foundation, and traced the sources of peculation to their most secret recesses. Every man who enters into

public life as a servant of the Crown, should make these folios his study. He will there learn this great moral lesson, that the safest and surest road to peace and happiness is, to keep himself and his private concerns quite clear from any contact with his public accounts ; to be at all times prepared for any inquiry which may be instituted ; and, in the emphatic words of holy writ, to be ready “ to give an account of thy stewardship, for thou mayest be no longer steward.”

The history of the impeachment and trial of Lord Melville occupies a very large space in the annals of the empire. It is a remarkable event in our history, and none ought to be more proud of it than the relatives of the noble lord, since it placed his character on that firm basis of integrity on which that of every public servant ought to stand. It is true, there were some noble lords who did not agree in the acquittal on the whole of the charges ; but the majority on each was sufficient to establish the innocence of the accused party, before a jury of his countrymen.

CHAPTER X.

Observations on giving contracts to people as a matter of favour—Letter to John Larkins, Esq.—To E—B—, Esq.—To John L—, Esq.—To Major-General Elliot—To Lord Minto—To J—B—C—, Esq.—To the Earl of Moira—Observations on insolence to superiors, occasioned by two captains returning Lord St. Vincent's printed declarations—Letter to Lord C— —To Lady B— —Death of Captain William Henry Ricketts Jervis, off Brest—Letter to Thomas Jervis, Esq.—To Major-General Elliot, Royal Marines—To W. Marsden, Esq., on the supply of masts for the navy, and the corruption of the dock yards—Observations on Mr. Jeffery's speech in Parliament—To Benjamin Travers, Esq., on the profligate waste and plunder of public treasure—To William Roscoe, Esq., on the discovery of a harbour in New Caledonia—To the same, on the Test Act, and the reports of naval inquiry—To Charles Le Felure, Esq.—To the Rt. Hon. Charles James Fox.

We now return to Lord St. Vincent's valuable correspondence, as a medium of setting forth the further course of his eventful career.

To John Larkins, Esq.

Rochetts, 23d January, 1803.

Sir,

From the reports which have been made to the Admiralty Board, a great part of the timber which you first purchased on account of government in Holland, is unfit for any use in the construction or repair of ships, and I am informed that what you last purchased is very little

superior to it. I am consequently so much disappointed in the expectations I had formed of your judgment and zeal to promote this great object of the public, that I must decline entering on the subject of your proposal to be employed in the same way here; the commissioners of the navy being, from their habits and experience, the proper persons to take into consideration any new mode of supplying his Majesty's yards with timber, and the persons best qualified to carry it into effect.

I am, Sir, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

To E—— B——, Esq.

Admiralty, 22d February, 1803.

Sir,

It is totally incompatible with the principles the Board acts upon, to admit of your filling an office in any of the dock yards, without devoting your whole time to the performance of the duties of it, which I explained to you distinctly in our last conversation; and I cannot help expressing a considerable degree of surprise that a proposition should again be made upon this subject, so diametrically opposite to the maxims laid down by the Board.

I am, Sir, your humble servant,

ST. VINCENT.

To John L——, Esq.

25th February, 1803.

My dear L——,

I take in good part your observations on the newspaper paragraphs: perhaps you are not aware that one of the charges brought against me is the having placed

your grandson in an office of responsibility, before he was of an age to justify the appointment; and, although I do not treat this attack seriously, I cannot, consistently with the principles which have hitherto guided my conduct, recommend him to the Board for a higher situation until he has gained more experience.

With my best wishes to your whole house,
Believe me to be, your's most truly,
ST. VINCENT.

To Major-General Elliot, R. M.

Rochetts, 1st January, 1804.

Sir,

In recommending you to his Majesty for the command of a division, I felt that I was performing an act of justice to a brave soldier, and an upright man, who would exert himself to correct the abuses which have crept into the staff department of the Royal Marines, whereby the embarkation lists have been loaded with heavy debts, and, in other instances, the public have sustained material loss; and I persuade myself your attention will be pointed to the charges of the deputy-paymaster, barrack-master, and quarter-master, in order to put a stop to unauthorized emoluments, and to the advance of pay on embarkation,—a scandalous practice, equally disgraceful to the corps, and injurious to the men.

I am, Sir, &c.
ST. VINCENT.

To Lord Minto.

Admiralty, 2d January, 1804.

My dear Lord,

You have no doubt been a great deal surprised at the silence I have held upon the subject of your

son's appointment to the Maidstone. The fact is, that I had written to Lord Nelson, naming the Captains Durban and Hillier (commanders of long standing and of great merit, neither of whom I ever saw, and I know them by reputation only), as the persons who were to fill the first vacancies of post captains, and this was followed by a public letter from the Board to the same effect. His lordship not having written to me when he gave Captain Elliot* an acting order to command the Maidstone, I was under the necessity of waiting an explanation, before I could recommend a commission to be made out for my young friend. A satisfactory one is now arrived, and the needful will be done forthwith.

Your's most truly,

ST. VINCENT.

To J—— B—— C——, Esq.

Admiralty, 3d January, 1804.

My dear Sir, \

There are few things Sir John Colpoys could advise, or you require of me, that I would not most readily comply with; but the case of Lieutenant ——, in whose fortunes I have felt a strong interest, is unfortunately of a description that cannot be treated lightly. He was stationed for the protection of the pilchard fishery and trade round land in Mount's Bay, and found his way to Cape Finisterre, abandoning the important duty he was employed upon, with a view to his private emolument; and the Board was in great doubt whether he should not be proceeded against in the most rigorous manner.

Your's most truly,

ST. VINCENT.

* The present Rear-Admiral the Hon. George Elliot, commander-in-chief on the South American station.

To the Earl of Moira.

Rochetts, 11th January, 1804.

My dear Lord,

I enter fully into your reasoning on the sound policy of keeping every body in good humour. The anchorage of the Glatton and Roebuck, in Aberlady Bay, will, I trust, do away all apprehensions of a descent between that Bay and Edinburgh; and, although I cannot subscribe to the opinion that the armed fishing vessels will be of use in the annoyance of an enemy after he is disembarked, I write to Admiral Bligh by the post, to give the assurance your lordship wishes, on the men who navigate them being regularly enrolled by Captain Clements,—who, I am sure you will agree with me, ought not to receive an affront, by the substitution of any other officer to a station he has filled with so much credit to himself, and the thorough approbation of his superiors.

Your's, my dear lord,

ST. VINCENT.

As insolence to those above us, or overbearing and improper language to an inferior, are alike unjustifiable, the following letters are given, while the names, though well known to the Editor, are concealed. Young officers should never forget the respect due to their superiors, whenever they enter into life, whether in a military or civil capacity; they can never forward their own interest by a display of what they sometimes call "spirit," in speaking to those above them, and there is no instance of its doing good in any cause. At the same time, I

am very far from advocating a mean subserviency with a view to preferment. A man should content himself with doing his duty cheerfully, silently, and without ostentation; and, if he really feels himself aggrieved, he should represent it in firm and respectful language to the author of the wrong, or to a higher authority, if it be within reach; but, when a first lord of the Admiralty pays a captain in the royal navy the compliment of sending him a letter containing matter, which, if he ever contemplated rising to the same rank, must have been interesting to him, that officer who would return such a letter to the writer, saying, he took no interest in either party, would be guilty of unpardonable insolence, and show a want of knowledge of the best rules of his profession, as well as of good breeding.

To Lord C——.

Mortimer Street, 21st January, 1804.

My Lord,

Assailed, as I have been, by base hireling assassins, I had no means of obtaining justice but by placing myself in the humiliating situation of making a string of affidavits before the chief justice of the Court of King's Bench; and I felt it due to my own character, as well as to the profession of which I am a member, to report progress as I proceed; and in so doing, a statement has been sent to every officer in the navy above the rank of lieutenant. Captain ——* has had the temerity to direct his back to

* Whom Lord St. Vincent saved from a court-martial, for running his ship foul of another, and disabling her.

the printer, with the most invidious and unjustifiable remark that ever was made by a man of his age, accompanied by unexampled rudeness.

I have the honour to be, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

To Lady B——.

Mortimer Street, February, 1804.

Madam,

The heavy load of affliction* under which I laboured on Saturday, prevented my answering your ladyship's letter by return of post: the same cause compels me to make use of an amanuensis.

The accompanying printed sheet will show that Captain B—— could not have misunderstood the purport and obvious intention of it. A brother officer of his, Captain * * *, employed on the same service, had the hardiesse to return his, with an observation that he took no interest in any of the parties; while Captain B——'s were of the most insidious kind, and can only be atoned for by such an apology as becomes a gentleman in error, either through Lord C—— or directly to, Madam,

Your Ladyship's, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

* This refers to the then recent and melancholy death of his nephew, Captain William Henry Jervis, who was drowned by the upsetting of his boat, while in the command of the Tonnant, off Brest. The fleet was at that time under the orders of Vice-Admiral Sir Charles Cotton, who had his flag in the San Josef. Captain Jervis having obtained some intelligence which he thought it right to convey immediately to the commander-in-chief, went in his boat for that purpose. He was attended by Captain, now Rear-Admiral, Sir Patrick Campbell, then commanding the Doris frigate. It was blowing extremely hard, and the boat filled and upset. Captain Jervis was the only person lost. He was at that time presumptive heir to the title of St. Vincent.

To Thomas Jervis, Esq.

Admiralty, 6th March, 1804.

My dear Sir,

You may impute the petulance of the enclosed, and all former irritation in your intercourse with the party, to the dread he feels of the secrets of the prison-house being disclosed; for though he is pure, the enormous emoluments of the department, taken out of the pockets of the seamen who fight our battles, would rouse the indignation of the country, were it known, by a discussion in the House of Commons. I very much approve your reply, which will, I trust, remove the cause of alarm; and, heartily wishing you a prosperous circuit, I remain,

Your's affectionately,

ST. VINCENT.*

To Major-General Elliot.

Mortimer Street, May, 1804.

Sir,

I am highly sensible of the honour which the officers of the Portsmouth division of the Royal Marines do me, in bearing testimony to the efforts I made for the advancement and benefit of the corps; and although I feel great repugnance to have my portrait taken, I cannot resist the desire they have expressed, that I should sit to an eminent artist, and hope they will approve of Sir William Beechey. With many thanks for the obliging manner in which you have made this communication,

I have the honour to be, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

* The above refers to one of the subjects of the naval inquiry.

It is worth while to compare the last paragraph of the following letter with the speeches of Mr. Jeffery and others in the House of Commons, in 1806, when those disgraceful charges were brought against Lord St. Vincent, but which, being founded in falsehood and party rancour, fell back on the heads of his accusers, and covered them with confusion.

To William Marsden, Esq.

Rochetts, 16th December, 1804.

My dear Sir,

Lord Melville may make what use he pleases of the Caldwell letters. The colonel is as honourable as he is brave—a younger brother of the late Sir James Caldwell. I don't know whether you are acquainted with the history of that family, every branch of which carried the point of honour to a degree of romance. There was a little *coup de hâche* amongst them, but it always took a right turn. Lord Melville does not seem to be aware of the attachment of the Navy Board to what they call *old respectable contractors*. He must expect every artifice to be employed against Caldwell's proposition, as it may interfere with the lucrative concerns of the New Brunswick contractors. I wish he could find time to read the correspondence upon the subject of masts sent to England from — yard: he would then discern the abominable connivance of Mr. —, and the officers of Halifax yard, to say no worse of it, in the receipt of large masts charged to government at very high prices by F—, few or none of which could be applied for the purpose they were estimated at, and many of them to no naval purpose. There is a great residue at Halifax, which

can only be used for the ordinary purposes, probably cut up for firewood. The whole ground is rotten in that department, and I fear in Deptford and Woolwich yards, also.

For the comfort of us all, there is a much greater quantity of oak timber in the kingdom than is represented. The contractors play their own game, and the persons we employed played pretty and popular with them, which, in my country, is called booty.

Your's most truly,
ST. VINCENT.

To Benjamin Travers, Esq.

(PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL.)

Mortimer Street, 16th February, 1805.

Sir,

I take exceedingly kind your obliging attention in the hour of affliction ;* for I prize the unsophisticated approbation of a man of stern virtue far beyond the incense of courts, or the fleeting applause of popular assemblies.

I have, by means of the Commission of Inquiry, exposed the profligate waste and plunder of the public treasure, in the civil department of the navy. I hope there is sufficient virtue in the two Houses of Parliament to punish great delinquents, and to enact laws to put a stop to their crimes. Unless there is, the country will not stagger long under the iniquitous weight of these blood-sucking leeches. All the sluices of corruption have been opened since I retired from the Admiralty.

Believe me, with great esteem, your's, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

* Referring to the death of his nephew, as mentioned in the preceding page.

To William Roscoe, Esq.

Mortimer Street, 13th March, 1805.

Sir,

I have many apologies to make to you for having taken the liberty to communicate your obliging letter of the 6th to Sir Joseph Banks. I confess that I felt a conscious pride in having Mr. Roscoe for my correspondent; and I had a further view, which was, that Sir Joseph would have added to your store some of the productions lately arrived from the newly-discovered, spacious, and safe harbour for any given number of ships of the largest size, in New Caledonia Captain Kent, who made the discovery in his Majesty's ship *Buffalo*, has done me the honour to name it Port St. Vincent. It lies in latitude $22^{\circ} 10'$, and longitude $165^{\circ} 55'$, a fine climate for botanic productions; and when the *Buffalo* returns from her voyage, I will exert every nerve to obtain some of them for your infant institution. You have my fervent wishes for the restoration of your valuable health.

I have the honour, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

To William Roscoe, Esq.

Rochetts, 7th April, 1805.

Sir,

I was brought to know the liberality of Sir Joseph Banks by reading the elegant discourses you pronounced on the opening of the Botanic Garden at Liverpool; and I had a very pleasant conversation with him on my return to town from Lancashire, last autumn, wherein he assured me of his intention to pay you a visit in the course of the ensuing summer.

I rejoice to learn that the interesting Life of Leo the Tenth is in such able hands, and have directed the publica-

tion to be sent to me the moment it comes out. I agree with you, in toto, as to the liberality which ought to be shown to all sects at this momentous period; and I cannot give a more substantial proof of it than by apprizing you, that, during the whole time I sat in the House of Commons, I uniformly supported every measure that was brought forward for the repeal of the Test Act.

Duplicates of nine Reports of the Commissioners of Naval Inquiries have been sent, through the medium of my friend Mr. Statham, to be deposited in your very valuable reading-rooms. The Tenth and Eleventh shall be forwarded to you in the course of next week, to be deposited in the Athenæum. I now find a difficulty in obtaining a sufficient number of copies to disperse amongst intelligent societies; for the members of both Houses of Parliament appear to be roused from the indifference and apathy which, it is painful to observe, pervaded the greater part of those persons who are called public men; insomuch that I began to despair of the country receiving any benefit from the efforts I made, while in office, to expose the profligate expenditure of the public money, which entailed upon me the inveterate enmity of Mr. ———.

I am, with perfect esteem, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

To Charles Le Felure, Esq.

Mortimer Street, September 7, 1805.

Sir,

Many thanks for your obliging letter. The public is always fair and liberal in passing judgment on those who serve it, when the case is justly stated; and, happily for me, the powerful eloquence and influence of Mr. ———, which have been exerted in every possible way to wound

my name and character, have failed in producing the effect he and his creatures expected.

Believe me to be, Sir, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

To the Hon. C. J. Fox.

Rochetts, 27th June, 1805.

My dear Sir,

The person who is much more than suspected of being the author of the libel which Mr. Budd stands convicted of having published, has proved himself to be such a monster of ingratitude to me, and in all other respects a base miscreant, that I have felt it a duty to the community to drag him forth to public view; and if Mr. Budd was half as well acquainted with his real character as I am, he would not hesitate a moment in giving him up. I beg you will be assured, that, under other circumstances, your wishes would have been a law to me; for I have nothing more at heart than to give proof of the regard and esteem,

With which, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

CHAPTER XI.

Parliamentary history from 1804 to 1810 — Mr. Pitt attacks the naval administration of Lord St. Vincent — Mr. Tierney replies, in support of Lord St. Vincent — Sir Charles Pole follows on the same side — Admiral Berkeley against them — Mr. Sheridan in support of ministers — Lord Carlisle's motion, prelude to change of ministry, which is officially announced on the 12th May — Lord Hawkesbury's motion on the slave trade opposed by Lord St. Vincent — Lord Albemarle's motion in favour of Lord St. Vincent, who makes a speech on the subject of inquiry into his own conduct — Lord Hawkesbury replies — Observations on Mr. Kinnaird's speech in the House of Commons on Sir Home Popham's affair in the Romney, affair of the Etrusco, and of Rio de la Plata — Talents of Sir Home Popham — Sir Charles Pole's observations — House of Commons crushes the naval inquiry by a majority of ninety-two to seventy-five.

THE memorable coalition between the parties in the House of Commons, at the head of which stood Mr. Pitt, on the one side, and Mr. Fox on the other, with that in the House of Lords, under the banners of Lord Grenville, was too formidable for Mr. Addington and his friends to withstand, and they were compelled to cede. The outcry raised by the opposition, consisting of Whigs and Tories within doors, and Catholics without, induced the nation to believe that

it was in danger of invasion, if not of conquest, owing to the supine indolence or indifference of the executive government. This change had in it, however, more of faction than of reality; and it is remarkable that Mr. Fox, the personal friend of Lord St. Vincent, voted with Mr. Pitt on that occasion, in support of a motion of inquiry on the state of the navy, under Lord St. Vincent's administration; stating (but I cannot help doubting the fact), that he did so to show his respect for the character of his noble friend.

The following is a brief outline of the debates which led to, and immediately preceded, the secession of Mr. Addington from office, and with him Lord St. Vincent:—

On the 15th of March, 1804, Lord St. Vincent being then first lord of the Admiralty, Mr. Pitt made his promised motion for an inquiry into the naval administration of the country. He required an account of the number of ships of the line, and armed vessels of all descriptions, which were in commission on the 31st December, 1793, on the 30th September, 1801, and on the 31st December, 1803; the object, of course, being to institute a comparison between the state of our naval strength at these periods; and he thought the result would be a conviction, that, considering the extent of the danger which then threatened us, the means of repelling

it by our naval efforts were more inadequate than at any former period. The Admiralty seemed to consider, that the sort of vessels which were peculiarly serviceable for repelling invasion were those of small burthen, which would run into shoal water; and yet they had only built twenty-three gun-vessels, while, in the same period, the enemy had built one thousand. During the last war the danger was much less pressing, and yet he was prepared to show that greater exertions were made. He accused the Admiralty of having contracted only for two ships of the line in the merchants' yards since the renewal of the war, when it was evident that we could not build ships in the King's yards, the hands being required to repair those which were employed on service.

Mr. Tierney replied to Mr. Pitt with great ability, and knowledge of his subject. He stated, that we had ships of the line, frigates, sloops, and other small vessels, to the number of 511; (it would have been better had he stated the number in each class); 9 block-ships; lighters, and small craft fitted out in the King's yards, 373; and the flotilla, completely equipped and fit for service, 624: making a total of 1536 vessels "equipped by this unworthy Admiralty." With respect to the charge of not building ships in the merchants' yards, Mr. Tierney replied, with unanswerable veracity,

that the ships built by such contractors were not found to answer. He alluded to some of "the forty thieves," as they were called. The *Ajax*, for instance, was one of them. She had cost in three years, from her first going to sea, £17,000 in repairs. It was unfair, he contended, to impute blame to the Admiralty for not raising more seamen: they were not to be had. Mr. Pitt had stated that we began the war, in 1793, with 16,000 seamen, and ended with 76,000; whereas we began the present war with 50,000, and had only augmented it to 80,000.

Vice-Admiral Sir Charles Pole defended the Earl of St. Vincent. He stated, that in forty-eight hours after the commencement of hostilities, Admiral Cornwallis was at sea; that Brest, Toulon, Ferrol, and Flushing, were in close blockade; and as for building gun-boats, he thought it much better to fight the enemy's boats with ships of a superior description.

Admiral Berkely concurred with Mr. Pitt; but Sir Edward Pellew, afterwards Lord Exmouth, very ably defended the conduct of the Admiralty. Mr. Wilberforce supported Mr. Pitt, and in doing so declared, that in the conversation he had had with different professional characters, and some of them highly distinguished in the service, all agreed in being dissatisfied with the present Admiralty.

Mr. Sheridan opposed the inquiry, and saw no good which could arise from a comparison between Lord Spencer and Lord St. Vincent. Mr. Sheridan said, he had heard that Mr. Pitt had, six months before, given as a toast, "The volunteers of England, and may we soon have a meeting with the enemy on our own shores." This sentiment, he added, might be much assisted in the execution, by substituting the honourable gentleman's favourite gun-boats for our ships of the line and frigates.

Mr. Fox said, though agreeing in some respects with Mr. Sheridan, he would still vote for the inquiry, convinced as he was that it would end in the entire exculpation of Lord St. Vincent, whom ministers wished, by opposing any investigation, to reduce to their own level. The battle which his lordship had fought against corruption and abuses in the naval departments, was full as arduous, if not as brilliant, as the celebrated battle from which he took his title, and he considered it was the merit of the noble lord which had excited so much obloquy against him.

Admiral Markham opposed the motion, and corroborated the statements of Mr. Tierney.

The motion was put: for it, 130; against it, 201—majority for ministers, 71.

After the Easter recess, the weakness of ministers began to be more apparent in the House

of Commons: they had only a majority of twenty-one, on the question of the suspension of the Army of Reserve Acts. On this occasion, Mr. Pitt, and most of his personal friends, voted with the opposition, and it was evident that the Addington administration was drawing to a close. This was shown more fully on the following day; and Lord Carlisle's motion, for papers respecting the date of instructions sent out to Admiral Rainier in the East Indies, was carried against ministers by a majority of one. It was generally supposed, that the renewal of the war had been known in India by private letters, seventeen days before the admiral had his despatches. This might have been true, yet not the fault of the Admiralty.

On the 12th of May it was publicly announced that Mr. Addington had resigned his situation as Chancellor of the Exchequer, and that he was succeeded by Mr. Pitt, who now came into office for the last time. Thus ended the naval administration of Earl St. Vincent, as first lord of the Admiralty, and "the Talents" came into office.

The following list shows Mr. Addington's administration at the time of his leaving office, and that of Mr. Pitt, which succeeded it.

| | |
|--|--|
| Mr. Addington, succeeded by Mr. Pitt, as First Lord of the Treasury, | |
| and Chancellor of the Exchequer. | |
| Lord St. Vincent | „ Lord Melville, as First Lord of the Admiralty. |

Lord Hawkesbury, succeeded by Lord Harrowby, Foreign Affairs.
 Lord Hobart „ Lord Camden, War and Colonies.
 Lord Pelham „ Lord Mulgrave, as Chancellor of the
 Duchy of Lancaster.

The Duke of Portland retained his seat as President of the Council under Mr. Pitt's administration. Thus a majority of the late ministry were retained, and formed a majority in the new cabinet.

Lord Eldon remained in as Lord Chancellor.

The Earl of Westmoreland retained his office of Privy Seal.

Lord Castlereagh retained his office as President of the Board of Control.

The Earl of Chatham retained his office as Master General of the Ordnance.

Lord Hawkesbury, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, under Mr. Addington, retained office, but replaced Mr. Yorke in the Home Department.

Considerable disappointment was felt by the public, that Mr. Fox was not included in this coalition. It was said, by the friends of Mr. Pitt, that the king's personal dislike prevented it; and it appeared that the exclusion of Mr. Fox prevented the adhesion of Lord Grenville and his friends.

The attack on the talents of Lord St. Vincent, as first lord of the Admiralty, contained in the Annual Register, 1804, vol. xlvii., are evidently drawn up by a party writer, whose partiality to Mr. Pitt has blinded him to the merits of his opponents. Much more was expected of Lord St. Vincent than could reasonably have been required of any man. He had, it is true, on coming into office, dismissed useless, worn-out, and corrupt officers from the dock yards, and replaced them by efficient men ;

he had sold old French prize ships, as defective and unsafe, and also much of the old stores of hemp, and other condemned or perishing articles ; and he had kept an eagle's eye on the ruinous expences of the country, being determined to stay the plague. Men are prone to believe what they wish to be true, and this had induced Lord St. Vincent to flatter himself that hostilities were more remote than they really proved to be. They had placed a greater reliance on Buonaparte than he deserved. This I must admit, and also the discernment of Mr. Pitt and Lord Grenville in foretelling a different result. But, after all has been conceded that our adversaries could require, we find no want of the means of a vigorous prosecution of the war in 1803, when it was renewed, or in 1804, when the enemy was insulted and bombarded in his own ports, where his preparations for invasion were supposed to have been in the greatest state of forwardness. Our ships were quickly at sea on the first renewal of hostilities ; and, in 1805, notwithstanding all the melancholy predictions of the croakers, Collingwood was enabled to give such an account of the enemy's defeat at Trafalgar, after the fall of the immortal Nelson, as had never before been read of in history ; and, what is still more triumphant for the memory of Lord St. Vincent, the very man (Mr. Pitt) who had been the

means of turning him out of office, sent to him, and made overtures to him, through Lord Sidmouth, to induce him again to come forward and serve ; which offer Lord St. Vincent “ indignantly spurned at.” Still more glorious and complete was his triumph, when, at the age of *seventy-two*, he was compelled to come forward to serve his country at sea, after those ministers who had displaced him had reduced that country to such an extremity as to unite all parties in her defence.

On the 3rd of July, Lord Hawkesbury moved, in the House of Peers, pursuant to previous notice, that the Slave Trade Abolition Bill should be read a third time that day three months. This motion was supported by Earl St. Vincent on solid grounds, founded on a personal knowledge of the nature of the subject, and the sad history of St. Domingo, which seemed to have been almost forgotten. “ To pass such a measure hastily,” said his lordship, “ would lead to consequences equally dreadful, and would end in the extirpation of every white inhabitant in the West India islands.”

The majority of the house concurring in this opinion, the bill was lost for that year ; and, when it was afterwards removed, and finally carried, Lord St. Vincent still opposed and protested against it.

Of that part of the slave trade which is

usually denominated the "middle passage," that is, from the shipment of the unhappy beings on the coast to their landing on the islands in the West Indies, there is not, I should conceive, one man of common humanity but what must hold it in horror ; yet Lord St. Vincent thought, with many others, that even this was better than leaving the poor captives to be put to death in cruel torments, by their masters or their conquerors in Africa.

The great measure of emancipation being now past, and the fearful consequences which I, along with many others, dreaded, not having ensued, it only remains that Great Britain should declare every slaver a pirate, and treat the commander and crew accordingly.

Earl St. Vincent said he availed himself of the first full attendance to notice what had fallen from a right honourable gentleman at the head of his Majesty's council, in another place, on Tuesday last, and to demand of the noble lords on the ministerial bench to declare whether it has ever been, or still was, in the contemplation of his Majesty's ministers to institute any inquiry into his conduct while at the head of the Admiralty Board. He believed he had some few friends on that bench, and he implored them, as the greatest mark of friendship they could confer on him, to furnish him with an opportunity to disclose the source and spring

of every action of his life, public and private, more especially those which governed his conduct as first lord of the Admiralty.

Lord Hawkesbury said he could not undertake to give any answer, or to enter into any explanation respecting what had passed in another place; but, as far as his own inquiries went into the noble lord's conduct, either before or after he left his situation, there did not certainly exist any grounds for thinking that such a measure as the noble lord alluded to was in contemplation.

Earl St. Vincent again rose, and after making some apologies to the house, said that he was not satisfied with that answer, and that he positively repeated his demand to be informed whether there was any intention to bring a charge against him or not?

Lord Hawkesbury repeated that he was not aware of any such intention.

The foregoing observations and demand of the noble earl grew out of a speech made in the House of Commons by Mr. Kinnaird, February 5th, 1805, on the subject of a charge made in a report of the Navy Board, of very heavy expenses incurred by Sir Home Popham in the Red Sea, for the repairs of his Majesty's ships *Romney* and *La Sensible*. Mr. Kinnaird was very keen and searching in his remarks, which he said were intended as much to defend

the honour and character of the gallant officer, and the members of his profession, as to prevent an improper and useless squandering of the public money. It would be recollected that, about the year 1800, the Romney and the Sensible had been fitted out for the purpose of co-operating with the British army in Egypt, which took place in the spring of the subsequent year, and were then in the Red Sea, under the command of Sir Home Popham. About May, 1803, as nearly as he could recollect, those ships returned to this country ; previous to which period bills had reached the Admiralty, to the amount of not less than £80,000, for the repair of these vessels. The Admiralty Board were naturally astonished at the enormity of this charge, and they accordingly instructed the Navy Board to examine into all the stores and repairs which these vessels had received, from the time of their departure from England, and to call for the several journals in which the amount of expenditure had been preserved. On the tone and character of these reports he had been principally inclined to rest his arguments for the production of papers, and for the motions with which he intended to conclude.

At the time the Romney sailed, she was stated to be completely provided with stores ; yet, as soon as she reached the Cape of Good Hope, which was before the expiration of three

months, she received other supplies, and in the course of the months of November and December following she received still farther supplies to the amount of £ 4000. The report, he said, of the commissioners of the navy was, that the journals of the ship were both irregular and contradictory ; that stores had been purchased at a most enormous price, and other articles on charge had not been accounted for in a satisfactory manner, or had rather been disposed of at less than a 20th part of their value. Among the charges was one for a fifty-hundred-weight anchor, purchased in the room of one said to have been lost in the Indian seas. Here, however, a remarkable circumstance occurred, that, when the inquiry was instituted at Sheerness as to the state of the Romney, it was stated that when she sailed from England she had on board the identical anchor said to have been lost, and which was found on board of her on her return ; nor did it at all appear that the other anchor, in the room of which this was said to have been purchased, was lost, or if it was lost, that it had ever been recovered.

Even if all extra expenses were to be admitted, there would still remain four or five thousand pounds, for which no sort of account is to be discovered in the journals of the boatswain or elsewhere. It was asserted that when the Romney left England she was fully pro-

vided with every species of stores for twelve months; that within a very short time after her sailing she had received repairs to the amount of £9000, of which £7800 the commissioners considered excess of charge. The charges on the repairs of the *Sensible* stood in the same predicament, and the same necessity for investigation existed. He did not know whether, at the time these expenses were incurred, Sir Home Popham was under the orders of Admiral Rainier, then commander-in-chief in India, or whether, as had been intimated, he held a separate command. If he had been under the orders of Admiral Rainier [he should certainly have consulted him, or obtained his consent for converting the *Sensible* from a troop ship into a regular 32-gun frigate. This was done by removing her poop, fitted in England at a great expense, and highly serviceable for the purpose for which it was intended, that of a cabin for the captain — leaving the other apartments below for the use of the military officers embarked.]* The honourable officer might have had grounds for this alteration, but it could not be pretended that he had communicated his reasons to the Admiral on the East India station; on the contrary, it appeared

* The words between brackets are the Editor's own construction from the sense and substance of Mr. Kinnaird's speech, but placing the transaction in a clearer and more technical light.

that one month previous to the arrival of the ship at Calcutta, the materials necessary for the alteration had been prepared. There were other accounts of transactions in the Red Sea, not a little curious. The gallant officer seemed to have found, contrary to general opinion, every thing quite as convenient for the repairs of ships, as if he had been actually in the heart of the river, and in the vicinity of the arsenals. It was proper that the public should understand the whole of these transactions, which were necessary to complete the view of the subject. Connected with this part of the question, he should also take the liberty of moving for certain letters from Marquis Wellesley, relative to the expenditure of the vessels under the command of the honourable officer while in the Indian seas.

He had heard, on good authority, that the late Board of Admiralty had designed to institute a criminal prosecution against the honourable officer. The change of administration, however, by which the late "*weak and inefficient*" Board of Admiralty had been changed for "*a capable and efficient one*" had prevented them from carrying their views into effect.

The reader will notice the sarcastic comparison between the two Boards of Admiralty. It certainly was the determination of the former to have brought the repairs of the Romney and

Sensible before a civil tribunal. I have given the whole of the particulars of the charges against Sir Home Popham ; because they were made a party question, both in the service and in the House of Commons, against Lord St. Vincent.

The most untoward affair Sir Home ever got into was when he took away the disposable forces from the Cape of Good Hope, in 1806, and proceeded to attack the enemy's settlement on the Rio de la Plata. For this he was brought to a court-martial in England, and censured. The act was imprudent, but not dishonourable : he hoisted a broad pendant without authority, and appointed a captain under him in the *Diadem*, by which he had very nearly lost all his prize-money ; for, not being acknowledged as a flag-officer, he was nobody in the prize-list. But he contrived to have the order in council so worded that he got the captain's share, and poor King, who was the captain, and who told me the story, shared as a lieutenant.

The capture of Sir Home, in the *Etrusco*, by Captain Mark Robinson in the *Brilliant*, was a fortunate circumstance for Sir Home, and by a singular piece of injustice, almost ruinous to the captain.

Sir Home Popham's knowledge of the Low Countries rendered him useful to the Duke of York, who, at the very time of his capture, was

appointed commander-in-chief of the army going to Holland. Sir Home was constantly with him, and Mr. Pitt, who placed great confidence in him, was subsequently employed with the Anglo-Russians at the Helder, in 1799, and the Emperor of Russia bestowed some honours upon him. Popham was certainly a clever man, and he contrived to mistify men of very superior talent to himself; but Lord St. Vincent and Lord Wellesley never liked him. The question of the expences incurred in the repairs of the *Romney and Sensible* was one capable of very simple solution: it was either true or false. The charges having been promulgated in an official document acknowledged by Admiral Markham in the House of Commons, it was the business of Sir Home Popham to have *demandé a court-martial* on himself, or, if he could not have obtained that, to have prosecuted his accusers for a libel.

It was in this question, and in defending the reputation of his friend Sir Home Popham, that Mr. Pitt said he disapproved of the conduct of the late Board of Admiralty; yet he did not think himself called upon to take a retrospect of the measures of the noble earl (St. Vincent) who presided, or those gentlemen who assisted, at that Board. Thinking on these subjects as he did, yet he entertained an unabated respect for the services of the noble

lord, and he thought it a little too hard to say that he had changed his opinion, because he had not exhibited motions against the late naval administration of this country [since he had come into office, I presume.] He begged it might be distinctly understood, that every opinion he had ever entertained of it when out of office, had been confirmed by every thing he had seen, or read, or heard of, since his being in office.

Sir Charles Pole said the papers required by Sir Home Popham were sent to the Board of Naval Inquiry, where he believed they still remained.

Sir Andrew Hammond, Comptroller of the Navy, said the papers had been sent to the Admiralty, and had never found their way back to the Navy Office. The motions were agreed to, and the subject was again postponed.

On the 22nd of February, Mr. Boroughs brought forward his motion for papers relative to an alleged fraudulent transaction connected with the naval service. Mr. Canning said that the Commissioners of Naval Inquiry had declined to investigate the case; meaning thereby that it was not worth the while of the House to go into it. Sir Charles Pole denied that such was the fact, but said that he, being a lord of the Admiralty, had given it as his opinion that the subject was much fitter for a court-martial. It

was then fixed for discussion on the 27th, when it was again postponed, on some frivolous pretext, the reason for which will very soon appear.

On the 1st of March the House decided against the motion of Mr. Giles for a continuance of the naval inquiry, by a considerable majority;—92 against 75. Thus ended the naval inquiry, commenced by a Whig ministry, and crushed by the Tories.

CHAPTER XII.

Lord Darnley in the House of Peers—Motion on the State of the Navy in Lord Melville's second administration as First Lord—Lord Melville's speech, and Lord St. Vincent's reply—Mr. Jeffery—Motion again in the House of Commons—Consolidation of Admiralty and Navy Board—Observations on the conduct and character of Sir Home Popham.—February 1806. Mr. Jeffery continues his attack on Lord St. Vincent—His violent language—Answered and refuted by Admiral Markham, Lord Howick, Col. Bastard, Mr. Fox, Mr. Canning, Mr. Wilberforce, Mr. Yorke—Vote of thanks carried in favour of Lord St. Vincent.

ON May 24th, 1805, Lord Darnley brought forward his motion on the state of the navy. His lordship, on this occasion, adduced a string of charges against the Admiralty, of the most criminal and atrocious negligence, profusion, waste, and peculation. His lordship disclaimed all personal views, and while he owned that his acquaintance with the Earl of St. Vincent was very slight, must do him the justice to say, that instead of his being called, as he had been by some slanderers, the greatest enemy of his country, he believed him to be its firmest friend. He had vanquished the enemies of his country abroad, and now returned to vanquish her still worse enemies at

home. That noble lord was not the patron of speculation, but the detector of abuses. He (Lord Darnley) did not, however, call their lordships' attention to the situation of the noble earl upon any consideration of his public services, brilliant and invaluable as they had been to his country ; he merely sought justice for him at their lordships' hands, against the base and unfounded imputation circulated by those who, in revenge for his detection of their misdeeds, had endeavoured to injure his character. By Lord St. Vincent it was that the inquiry was set on foot which led to the detection of many and such enormous frauds. He had set his shoulders to the wheel, and, in spite of art, influence, and evasions, undaunted by the number as well as the magnitude of the impediments he had to encounter, he pushed that inquiry to the utmost, and set an example to that House, which his country had universally applauded, and which the noble lord hoped their lordships would adopt. Lord Darnley concluded by moving, "That a select committee be appointed, to consist of the Duke of Clarence, the Marquis of Buckingham, Lord Winchilsea, Lord Albemarle, Lord Ducie, Lord Auckland, Lord King, and four or five other noble peers, to take into consideration the several papers on the table relative to the state of the navy."

Lord Melville rose and replied to Lord Darnley. His lordship defended himself extremely.

well from the attacks levelled at him during the short period he had presided at the Admiralty, as successor to Lord St. Vincent. The object of these attacks was chiefly for having built ships of the line in merchants' yards, and in which he quoted Lord St. Vincent as a sufficient authority. There was a very sharp controversy between the Admiralty and the Navy Board. It appears, that after Lord St. Vincent, at that time at the head of the Admiralty, had given orders to Sir Andrew Hammond, then comptroller of the navy, to build ships of the line in the merchants' yards, he suddenly gave counter-orders; and the following is the reason:—on making an annual survey of ship timber for building in store in the King's dock-yards, it was discovered that an alarming deficiency existed; it was therefore wisely determined, first to replenish the dock-yards with that indispensable article, and when that was completed, to renew the contracts. But here it would appear the Government had met with an obstacle; for after the merchants had supplied the King's yards with timber, the war was renewed; and the price of tonnage charged for building a ship of the line was raised from £26 to £36 per ton. Lord Melville's speech was long and luminous, and Lord St. Vincent replied to it with his usual brevity and clearness. He spoke to the following effect:

“ Mylords, the noble lord having thought proper to step out of his way for the purpose of bringing

charges against me, I trust I shall be justified in shortly trespassing on your lordships' attention. The inconsistency the noble lord has so much complained of, I can readily explain. Since the custom was of contracting for as many 74-gun ships, of the smaller class, as the Navy Board could find fit merchant-builders to undertake; but when I was able to attend the board, it was shewn to me that his Majesty's dock-yards were so lamentably unprovided with timber, that it would have been bad policy in the extreme to have accepted any of the tenders for building ships in the river Thames; and a resolution was accordingly made, to suspend the building of ships on that river, until the more important measure of furnishing the royal arsenals with timber was accomplished. I maintain that ten ships of the line may be launched annually from the dock-yards of his Majesty, without impeding the necessary repairs of ships on service, or incurring any additional expense in the wages of artificers; and when it is considered how wretchedly most of the contract-built ships lately furnished to the navy have been fastened (he alludes to "devil-bolts"), noble lords will perceive the necessity of having the whole work of the navy, as it relates to building and repairing, in the arsenals of his Majesty."

Lord Melville had made an observation relative to a document from the first lord of the Admiralty to the comptroller of the navy, ordering the latter

to drop all communication with the first lord of the Admiralty. On this subject Lord St. Vincent says, " with respect to the ministerial communications between the first lord of the Admiralty and the comptroller, it is one of the great vices of the Navy Board, and serves no other purpose but to screen them from all responsibility ; for, when called upon to account for disobedience of the most positive orders from the superior board, the constant reply is, that the comptroller explained the reason in a ministerial (*i. e.* a private) official communication to the first lord of the Admiralty. In short, since the ill-fated measure of putting the commissioners into committee, and the parliamentary authority for secret measures concerted between the comptroller and the first lord, all responsibility has ceased, and much gross abuse has arisen in the measures under the comptroller's auspices. With respect to that person (said his Lordship), I certainly should have availed myself of the proposition of my noble friend Lord Sidmouth, to have removed him, had not his conduct been under the investigation of the commissioners of naval inquiry, the result of which will, I am confident, occasion his ignominious dismissal ; and, if complete justice is done, it will extend to the whole board, with the exception of Mr. Osborne Markham : for, exclusive of him, there is not one member who does his duty to the public, or is competent to his office.

As to the noble lord's attack on me, I treat it with the contempt it deserves ; but I shall consider the rejection of the motion of my noble friend as an act of great injustice done to myself."

The motion, notwithstanding, was rejected by a majority of 55—88 to 33.

July 1, 1805.—Mr. Jeffrey again brought forward his very silly charges against Lord St. Vincent, in which he presumed to call him the worst enemy this country ever had. He was loudly called to order. Admiral Markham said, the hon. gentleman's assertions were unworthy of notice. This business, which related to the alleged neglect of Lord St. Vincent in not building and repairing ships during his naval administration, was postponed by Mr. Jeffrey to the next session.

The consolidation of the Admiralty and Navy Boards, by the Act of Parliament passed in the year 1835, has for ever put an end to these bickerings. I lament very much that any difference of opinion should have existed between Lord St. Vincent and Sir Andrew Hammond, of whom I must say, without ever having had the honour of his acquaintance, that in my memory he was universally esteemed throughout the service as a brave and correct officer. I suspect there were mischief-makers between him and Lord St. Vincent.

The affair of the Romney and Sensible was again brought before Parliament, Lord St. Vin-

cent having retired from the administration. There were those also who thought enough had been said on the subject ; but it was undoubtedly one of those charges against an officer, which ought to have been instantly disproved, or the offender brought to justice. Neither the one nor the other being done, the charge remains to this day. In the following year (1807) I met Sir Home Popham at Copenhagen, holding the high and honourable post of captain of the fleet to Lord Gambier, when the Danish fleet was brought away. I humbly conceive that an officer should not have been employed until his character had been purified from the charges which hung over him ; and it must be admitted, that his holding that high rank, in preference to men of equal talent, honour, and distinguished bravery, was treating the service generally with great disrespect.

I should be sorry if it were thought I had written these lines with any hostile feeling towards Sir Home Popham ; my only wish and object being, to clear the fame of Lord St. Vincent of any blemish which may attach to it in connection with this charge. Lord St. Vincent's object was to do justice to the public, and to expose whatever he considered to be fraudulent or wrong ; and such he had a right to consider the charges of £80,000 for stores and repairing the Romney, and altering the *Sensible* ; and the onus of dis-

proving these charges rests with the friends of Sir Home Popham. Having said thus much, I am willing to admit that Sir Home deserves immortal honour for his admirable invention of the sea telegraph. His was the trumpet of fame which enabled the great Nelson to communicate to his fleet, in the brief space of three minutes, "England expects every man will do his duty." Sir Home was, in 1809, employed at Walcheren, with Lord Chatham and Sir Richard Strachan, when I never heard any thing against him; on the contrary, I believe he shewed both zeal and talent: but when the House of Commons went into inquiry on that subject, he defeated them by "*covering their table with papers*"!

On Tuesday, the 28th January 1806, Mr. Jeffrey, in pursuance of notice, again renewed his charges against Lord St. Vincent, with all the acrimony of abuse which parliamentary courtesy would permit. He accused his lordship and his friends of procrastination; as a proof of which, he referred the House to those voluminous papers which had been laid on their table—papers which, he was sure, no one would read—and the printing of which, it will be remembered, the honourable gentleman had so much deprecated in a former session. Mr. Jeffrey concluded by moving that the papers should not be printed, and that the order for their being printed should be discharged. After a very long and a very useless

discussion, he edified the House and the country with the following most luminous speech :—" He begged permission to say a single word respecting the charge brought against him, relative to his motives in originating this business. He was ready to assure the House that he had taken it up without premeditation (*a laugh!*), and in consequence of no previous consultation with any one; he had never read any of the papers in office, and had only spoken from his general knowledge of the subject:" in other words, he had brought forward a motion without knowing any thing at all about the matter.

Mr. Dickenson, jun. (then a lord of the Admiralty) corroborated this testimony as far as it related to the Admiralty, assuring the House that the honourable member had had no communication with that office. The honourable member was then permitted to withdraw his motion.

Here, then, is one of the *parturiunt montes* of the day; one of Lord St. Vincent's most desperate and determined opponents—certainly not the most able—one who had declared his lordship to be the greatest enemy this country had ever had—coming into the House of Commons night after night, session after session, boring the House to death with long stories, of which, according to his own shewing, he knew nothing, had never premeditated on the subject, and had not even

taken the pains to inform himself of its bearings and details.

Still Mr. Jeffrey had not done. On the 23d of April he again renewed his invective against the noble lord, and gave notice that on the 6th May he should positively bring forward his charges; but it was not till the 12th (when the subject was mentioned, and again postponed for the convenience of the House) that Mr. Jeffrey, on being again applied to, stated that his charges against Lord St. Vincent would be "for misconduct, neglect, and mismanagement whilst he was first lord of the Admiralty."

On the 14th May Mr. Jeffrey rose, and addressed the Speaker to the following effect. He begged to call the attention of the House to the papers laid on the table; protested that he undertook the task of public accuser from a sense of duty only, impelled so to do by the repeated, ill-timed, and extravagant praises of the Earl of St. Vincent's zealous, but mistaken friends. He lamented that the task had not fallen into abler hands; he then went over the hacknied route of the number of ships built from the year 1783 to 1793, and of the number *not* built by Earl St. Vincent, during his lordship's naval administration.

If Mr. Jeffrey had understood the subject on which he was so uselessly taking up the time of the House, I should have had great pleasure in

following him, although he had been still more severe against his intended victim ; but it was plain, from his own declaration, as well as the facts he adduced in support of his charges, that he knew no more about a ship, than, as the sailors say, “ a ship knew about him.”

It is true, as he observed, that between October 1801 and May 1804, we had paid off 114 sail of the line and 120 frigates, of which 110 of the former and 115 of the latter required repair ; it was also true that during the greater part of the last war, we had 110 sail of the line, and 170 frigates in commission. But when he states that any ship will on an average run fifteen years, he is quite in error. No doubt they may be patched up, and renewed in their defective parts, so as to last much longer ; but Mr. Perring, the late clerk of the check at Plymouth dock-yard, calculated that eight years is the utmost extent of duration of our ships in time of war. Mr. Jeffrey then went again into the charge of neither building nor repairing, on which (from a written speech, which the Speaker reminded him was an indulgence not to be drawn into a precedent) he rang all the changes and varieties of which the subject was susceptible. His long and voluminous string of resolutions was then put.

Admiral Markham rose and ably vindicated the character of Lord St. Vincent from charges

which he termed the most unfounded that ever were offered to any House of Parliament. He overthrew the whole of the hon. mover's imaginary calculations, by discarding from them the increase of ships in the navy by capture, and leaving only those which were built in England; by which means he divested the subject of all mystification, and left as the produce of each Admiralty, about the same annual average of three ships of the line in each year, and consequently that Lord St. Vincent had contributed his full quota. The gallant admiral not only rebutted all the charges brought against his noble friend, but proved that his exertions, when at the head of the Admiralty, had been equal to, if not far superior to any of his predecessors. To prove that no want of timber was experienced, he stated that the number of ships repaired in the King's dock-yards, from October 1804 to May 1805, amounted to sixty-one, and eighteen frigates were repaired in the merchants' yards. With respect to not repairing more in merchants' yards, he stated, that the enormous prices charged by the merchants prevented it. In one ship alone the charge for repairs was £12,392, when the charge for building her new, in the same time, would have been only £7,943. In short, the total charge for repairs, for a certain number of ships, amounted to £252,607, when the building new would have cost only £150,280. The gallant admiral adduced many other instances.

The charge of dismissing able shipwrights from the dock-yard was disposed of in a summary way :—*none* were dismissed who were capable of working ; but the lame and the blind were pensioned off, or discharged with a reasonable compensation—men who had been doing nothing, and yet receiving the highest wages given in the dock-yards. 327 men, who in 1800 had received no less than £28,024, were superannuated by Lord St.Vincent, and their future comfort in life carefully provided for. So much for the tyranny of the noble earl ; while, in lieu of the 327 discharged as useless, 390 apprentices were received.

The gallant admiral was equally successful and convincing when he came to the subject of ship-timber, of which Lord St.Vincent had been accused of stripping the dock-yards. His lordship had sent to the Rhine, to Trinidad, to the East-Indies, to Botany Bay, for that article ; he had moreover ordered ships to be built at Bombay ; and as for not employing the merchants to build ships of the line, he would only instance the *Ajax* and *Achilles* : the former was launched on the 3d of March 1798, commissioned in the same month, and in the month of June following she got no further than Portsmouth, where her repairs amounted to £2,788 ; her building had cost £20,502, and in 1802 her repairs cost £28,977. The *Achilles* was launched and commissioned in 1798 ; in the following year her repairs cost £1,124, and in 1803 and 1804, her repairs came to £37,900.

Lord Howick (the present Earl Grey) would not agree that such a variety of charges as had been exhibited against the noble lord by the hon. mover, could be centred in one point, as had been stated by Lord Garlies. The noble viscount declared that the country was indebted to the noble earl for having raised her naval glory to a high pitch; while he was accused, by Mr. Jeffrey, of intentionally working her ruin. "Surely," said Lord Howick, "the hon. gentleman could not believe any such thing. The hon. gentleman said, it was a matter of indifference to him how the house disposed of his motion, and the seconder of the motion said, '*he* knew nothing about the matter:' an odd confession*.

Lord Howick continued. "The hon. mover dwelt upon the difference of our shipping in numerical force, at the conclusion of last war, and the commencement of the present; attributing this difference to the naval administration of the Earl of St. Vincent. Now what was the fact? Why, that at the close of the war, such was the state of the fleet that there were only two sail of the line in good condition; and yet, although at the commencement of the war there were only thirty-six sail of the line fit for service, we had, in twelve months afterwards, no less than eighty-eight sail of the line in commission; and now we had one hundred and one, together with eight fitting out

* Reminding us of the Professor of Ignorance at Oxford.

from a state of ordinary." After having gone over the accusations one after the other, and refuted the whole of them, the noble viscount concluded by expressing his conviction, that no blame could attach to Earl St. Vincent, upon any of the grounds stated by the hon. mover.

Mr. Dent (the seconder of the motion) said he was happy he had afforded the noble lord an opportunity of entering upon so ample a discussion and explanation of the subject, which he could not have done had not he (Mr. Dent) seconded the motion.

Col. Bastard paid a high compliment to Lord St. Vincent, for his conduct in expelling the refractory shipwrights from the dock-yard at Plymouth, when he stated that a party of these had erected a tree of liberty on board the Culloden, under the banner of which, alone, they said they would act. "He (Col. Bastard) was at the head of the military force which it became necessary to employ, for the purpose of reducing these insurgents to obedience at the point of the bayonet. These were the men who afterwards went into the service of the enemy, as the hon. gentleman who brought forward the motion had stated ; and the House would see what sort of artificers they were. He saw no blame whatever that could be attached to Lord St. Vincent, notwithstanding the hon. gentleman had read his pamphlet to the house." Col. Bastard alluded in the course of his

speech, to the silent claims of the noble earl to the consideration of the House, for spending his latter days in the active service in which he was then employed, in the seventy-second year of his age, instead of enjoying that which he had right to expect, the *otium cum dignitate*, on shore with his family.

Mr. Jeffrey made a long reply, which is barely adverted to in the records. He was proceeding to read another lecture to the House, from printed and written documents, when he was stopped by the Speaker; the question was then put for referring the papers to a committee, and was negatived without a division.

Mr. Fox then rose and said, "that if the hon. gentleman had made his motion in a tangible shape, which could be brought into a question, he should have moved that the charge was frivolous and vexatious; but the hon. gentleman had been extremely cautious, and had declined to bring forward his motions, either in the house or in the committee which he moved for. As to the charge itself, he did not hesitate to pronounce it frivolous and vexatious; and he thought the House had, by the vote they had just given, pronounced it void of foundation. Under these circumstances, he thought it right to do what the House had often done under similar circumstances, by expressing their approbation of the conduct of that noble person who had been so

unjustly attacked. He remembered, when a charge was brought in that house against Admiral Keppel, no sooner was the accusation rejected, than the House, by their vote, expressed their approbation of his conduct. It had been also done when a charge was brought by General Burgoyne against the late Lord Clive. It had been said by the hon. gentleman opposite (I believe the mover), that he (Mr. Fox) was in the habit of making extravagant encomiums on the noble earl. He had only expressed what he felt—a most sincere respect for the character of the noble earl, and particularly for the zeal and activity he had displayed in the discovery and reformation of abuses.” Mr. Fox concluded by moving, “That it appears to this House, that the conduct of the Earl of St. Vincent, in his late naval administration, has added an additional lustre to his exalted character, and is entitled to the approbation of this House.”

Mr. Wilberforce objected to the motion, as did Mr. Canning; but it was ably seconded by Mr. Yorke (the late Right Hon. Charles Yorke, afterwards first lord of the Admiralty), who said, he considered the charge brought against the noble earl as frivolous, from beginning to end; and when a great public character was attacked, when a man who had so long distinguished himself in the service of the country, and who still continued to serve it, was subjected to such

accusation, he thought that when the House was of opinion that the charge was unjust, they should express their approbation of the conduct of the person who was the object of it ; he therefore gave his warmest support to the motion.

The motion for a vote of thanks was then put, and carried without a division. Mr. Fox was at that time secretary of state for the home department, to which he had succeeded by the death of Mr. Pitt, which had taken place in 1805.

CHAPTER XII.

Lord St. Vincent again in command—His motives for accepting employment—Letter to Admiral Cornwallis on his (Lord St. Vincent) taking the command of the Channel fleet—To Sir Charles Grey—To Rear-Admiral Markham—To Lord Moira—To Rear-Admiral Markham—To Sir Charles Grey—To Rear-Admiral Markham—To Ditto—To Ditto—Observations on the duties and responsibility of Lieutenants—Letter to Sir Charles Pole—To Viscount Howick—To Ditto—To Rear-Admiral Markham—To Ditto—To Ditto—To Earl Spencer—To Rear-Admiral Markham—Viscount Howick—Sir Charles Pole—To Capt. Hallowell.

LORD St. Vincent was now called from his well-earned retirement, and from the enjoyment of all his domestic comforts, at the age of seventy-two, by the men who had been instrumental in turning him out of office. Mr. Pitt, his great opponent, it is true, was dead; but the overture had been made to him during the life-time of that minister, and while he was in office, and had been rejected. Lord St. Vincent's reasons for accepting public employment on this occasion cannot be called in question. He had no occasion to go to sea, with a view either to pecuniary considerations or to public honours; for he had as much of both as

he could desire: but the claim on him to serve, after all that had been said against him, both in and out of parliament, was surely the greatest triumph he could have desired. His lordship must have possessed extraordinary vigour, both of body and mind, at that advanced age, thus to undertake another naval campaign, and one which was likely to be attended with more than usual difficulties; as the want of good seamen became more evident, daily.

I now again recur with pleasure to his lordship's correspondence, as furnishing the record of the period in question.

The following letter seems to refer to the offer of employment, before the earl had made up his mind to accept it—or rather, at a moment when he had determined on refusing it:—

To Earl Moira.

Rochetts, January 1806.

My dear Lord,

The being disabled, by the wretched state of my health, from paying obedience to the commands of his royal highness the Prince of Wales, upon an occasion which would have been highly gratifying to every feeling of my mind, is by far the severest mortification I ever endured, in the course of a long and chequered life. Have the goodness to present my humble duty to his royal highness, and express the high sense I feel of this additional and great mark of kindness, and inform his royal highness that I have been seriously deliberating, during the last three weeks, whether I should not embark in the Amazon for a milder climate,

and that nothing short of the calamitous state the country is brought into, could have prevented it.

Permit me to thank your lordship, for the very obliging manner in which you have made this invaluable communication, and to assure you of the truest respect and esteem,

With which, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

When referring, on one occasion, to the difference between himself and Mr. Pitt, his lordship particularly called my attention to the following letter. The offensive language imputed to the right hon. gentleman will be found in the Parliamentary Debates, 15th March 1804.

To the Hon. Wm. Cornwallis, Commander-in-chief of the Channel Fleet.

Mortimer-street, Feb. 6, 1806.

My dear Admiral,

Some months after Mr. Pitt came into office the last time, a request was made to me by his cabinet, through Lord Sidmouth, to take the command of the fleet, which I indignantly spurned at, unless Mr. Pitt would unsay all he had said in the House of Commons against me; and, lest any unfavourable impression should have been made on the mind of the King on this subject, I asked an audience of his Majesty at Windsor, and humbly submitted, that although my life was at the disposal of his Majesty and my country, I was the guardian of my own honour, and could not trust it in the hands of Mr. Pitt, after the treatment I had received from him. I am now called upon again to serve, and, in the state the empire is reduced to, I feel it an imperative duty to obey the call, with only one repugnance, which arises out of the high respect and esteem I have for you, and I beg you will rest assured that every possible delicacy

will be paid to your zealous services, for no man regards you more sincerely, than

Yours, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

To Sir Charles Grey.

Hibernia, Spithead, March 9, 1806.

My dear Sir Charles,

I embarked yesterday, in very good time, after going through the necessary ceremonials at Portsmouth, and in the dock-yard. What I have seen of the Hibernia I like much, and Captain Western has very great merit in having purified her. The men appear of mean stature, and flimsy muscle, particularly the marines: but we must make the most of them, until we can mend ourselves, without giving offence. It is my intention to put to sea the first favourable moment. At present the wind is right an end, and it looks as if we should have dirty weather.

Yours most truly,

ST. VINCENT.

To Rear-Admiral Markham.

Hibernia, off Ushant, 27th March 1806.

My dear Admiral,

You have enclosed a *précis* of our own order for establishing the complement of this ship, and you may guess my surprise and disappointment on viewing forty-five of the most filthy creatures that ever were embarked. There must be something radically wrong in the *Salvador del Mundo*, for the skins of these poor creatures were coated with dirt, and could not have been washed—no not even their hands and faces—for a length of time; insomuch that I tremble for the health of this ship's crew; for we had fourscore upon the sick list, owing to the sloppy and blowing weather we have experienced since sailing from St. Helen's, before the receipt of this germ of disease.

While upon the subject of health, let me call your attention to the deplorable state the hulks at Plymouth* are in, and request that they may be alternately cleared of their ballast, the limbers and wells cleaned and purified, and the master's attendant required to inspect them frequently, and to report through the commissioner to the Admiralty whether the commanders of the ships whose crews are on board of them do their duty, in preserving the same cleanliness and economy observed on board their proper ships. No provisions but what are absolutely necessary for the people should be removed into them; and the holds should be shut up in such a manner, that no filth or dead animals can be thrown into them. The crews of the *Impétueux* and *Centaur*, with those of other ships, I have no doubt have been ruined by diseases generated from these causes.

Yours most truly,

ST. VINCENT.

* The hulks, or receiving ships, were at that period shamefully neglected, and the observations of Lord St. Vincent produced much reform in that department of the dock-yard. They are now in much better order. I can vouch for the correctness of the above picture of the men who used to *infest* our ships, as sent from the guard-ships. Their personal appearance, in spite of every attention, was most miserable, particularly the importations at Plymouth from Dublin, Cork, and Limerick. I remember being ordered on a survey for some of them in 1811, and so truly wretched and unlike men did they appear, that I took portraits of them, which I gave to Captain Nash, of the *Salvador del Mundo*. My wonder is, that more of our ships were not taken by the Americans in the late struggle, when it is considered how shamefully they were manned. All this is owing entirely to our impress system, which tends to drive the seamen out of the country the moment a shot is fired in anger, and to prevent young people entering the naval or even the merchant service, in time of peace, for fear of being impressed in time of war.

To Sir Charles Grey.

Hibernia, 27th March 1806.

My dear Sir,

I congratulate you most heartily upon the gallant exploit of my friend Sir John Duckworth. I was confident he would find the squadron he had chased at St. Domingo, if he arrived there in time. The division which separated off the Canary Islands, it is very difficult to account for. Jerome Buonaparte being embarked, it cannot be destined for the Chesapeake. The Cape of Good Hope then, or after cruising a given time for our outward-bound convoys, and afterwards returning to Europe, are the only probable destinations. I have detached the *Minerva* off Cape Finisterre, to apprise Sir Richard Strachan; with directions to cruise upon that station, having an eye to Vigo, as long as his water and provisions will permit; and I have signified to Vice-admiral Thornborough that I shall reinforce him with one or two ships, probably of three decks, as soon as I am joined by Sir Charles Cotton; and I am of opinion that a fresh squadron should be formed, to relieve that under the orders of Sir Richard Strachan, composed of the ships ordered to join from Portsmouth and Plymouth.

I was not able to get up near enough to the port of Brest this day, although wind and weather were very favourable, to make my own observations upon the state of the enemy's ships. Lieut. Newton, of the *Frisk* cutter, who appears to be a very intelligent officer, is confident they have shifted their berths, and are placed in the most advantageous manner to push out. This may be demonstration; but, circumstanced as Ireland is, I conceive it would be very improper not to keep the most vigilant eye upon this port, especially as no great force is required for it.

I conclude the squadron which I left in Falmouth harbour, with the addition of the *Warrior* and the *Dragon*,

will appear to-morrow, as the wind is so moderate and favourable for their getting out.

Yours most truly,

ST. VINCENT.

To Rear-Admiral Markham.

Off Ushant, 29th March 1806.

My dear Admiral :

We are between Ushant and the Black Rock, in the day—stand off at night, and in at four o'clock in the morning. The Mars anchored off the Black Rocks ; Diamond, l'Agile, and small craft, off the Parquette, and the Crescent looks out to the northward of the Ushant. I cannot approve the rendezvous of my predecessor, "seven leagues S.W. of Ushant," and intend to change it to, *well in with Ushant during an easterly wind.*

Upon conversing with an intelligent mid. of this ship, who was in the Amethyst when Sir J. Duckworth fell in with the French squadron, off the Canaries, I am convinced it has gone to the southward ; destined either for the Cape of Good Hope, or to do us as much mischief as possible at St. Helena and Ascension. Should Sir John Warren proceed to the Cape de Verdes, he will probably get some scent of the squadron, which could not be the one Duckworth smote at St. Domingo. I send you the young man's observations during the two days they were in sight of the French squadron, because they do him much credit : his name is Pitt ; he has lately passed his examination for a lieutenant, and was a shipmate of mine in the Argo.*

Very truly yours,

ST. VINCENT.

* A good hint to young officers to look about them on all occasions, especially when an enemy is in sight, and never to omit writing down their observations. This young man was immediately promoted.

To Rear-Admiral Markham.

Hibernia, off the Black Rocks, 2d April 1806.

My dear Admiral :

The commander-in-chief of the port of Plymouth* is so quaint, I do not know what I shall do, if you feel a difficulty to give him orders to dispatch such ships to me as you may judge necessary to place under my command. I have a notion he wishes to have the power of issuing orders for their sailing, to entitle him to prize-money, if *par hasard* they should make a capture *en route*. Surely you have not put that arch knave old —— in the E—— store-ship? He will sell all the stores, unless he is regenerate.

I hope you will refer the report of the Commissioners of Revision to a committee of the House of Commons, and examine Curtis and Domett upon it.

Yours ever,

ST. VINCENT.

He who could write the following letter to Sir Charles Pole, then a lord of the Admiralty, and who had been one of the Board of Naval Enquiry, was neither inattentive to the real wants of the profession, nor unmindful of what was due to the better class of seamen, by giving them higher ratings, and improving their condition as to the work they had to perform. I am always glad also

* The late Admiral Sir Wm. Young. He was, however, a most correct and determined officer;—a man of talent; but not likely to give up one iota of his rank and privilege. The dispute between him and Lord St. Vincent, in which the late Sir George Montagu, as port-admiral at Portsmouth, was included, should have been decided by their superiors.

to hear of any indulgence shown to the medical profession, and do not think they were ever too well paid ; though perhaps the executive officers should have been at the same time raised a little more, in proportion to their services : I mean the lieutenants—a class of men whom the impolicy of former Governments left unprotected and unprotected. They were expected to take charge of his Majesty's ships under the most difficult and trying circumstances ; to be answerable with their characters and commissions, for all accidents, and (like the gallant young officer of the watch on board the *Castor*) to be dismissed the service with ignominy and disgrace, for a common casualty ; to find their own table, to dress like gentlemen, and to rank with captains in the army. And what is the charge and responsibility of a captain in the army at any time, compared to that which, in his daily and nightly occupation, devolves on a lieutenant of the navy ? A ship of the line or a convoy may be saved by his skill, or lost by his negligence ; and while the severest penalty attaches to one oversight, good conduct is not always rewarded. Greenwich Hospital, and the retirement of the poor naval knights of Windsor (seven lieutenants out of three thousand), compose very nearly all that the deserving half-pay officer can look up to.

The history of the gallant young McClaverty (just alluded to), shows the responsibility of an

officer of the watch in such a point of view, as to convince us, that though the rank and situation of a young lieutenant is often enviable, yet the sword of Damocles hangs over him, and one accident may blast all his prospects.

The *Castor* frigate being off Dover, and bound to the westward, with a fair wind and smooth water, in *charge of the master as pilot*, was shaking her reefs out at six o'clock in a summer's morning. The foresail was set, the officer of the watch having his eyes aloft, when the utmost attention is required that the sail is not split by the carelessness of the sailors, who often cast off the outer points and let go their earings, while the inner points are kept fast ; by which means, the whole weight of the sail resting on the latter, it is torn or split, and the lieutenant of the deck censured, and thought a lubber for his neglect. It was in the performance of this duty, and when he very naturally supposed the master was looking out a-head, that the frigate ran over the *Cameleon* cutter. The palpable neglect of the cutter's people, seemed as if they had courted their fate. Every one on deck, except the lieutenant, should have seen the relative position of the frigate and the cutter, in time to have prevented the accident. A clamour is raised in the public press, by writers perfectly ignorant of our duties ; Mr. McClaverty is brought to a court-martial, tried, and dismissed the service ; while the master, who absolutely had

charge of the steerage of the ship, comes off harmless and blameless. True, the Admiralty did, after the lapse of a painful year, restore the young man to his rank : a proof that their lordships thought the sentence too severe. This instance should prove to our countrymen, that the "flower of the navy," which the lieutenants have been justly called, have tremendous responsibility, and are sometimes hardly treated. I must observe, that I never knew Mr. McClaverty or any one of his relations ; neither do I find fault with the members of the court-martial,—who are supposed to have been guided by their oath, and the facts brought before them ; still the case has always appeared to me a hard one.

Having said thus much in favour of the lieutenants, I must at the same time confess with shame, that young men who now obtain that rank are not so ready to serve as they should be, and prove the justice of Lord St. Vincent's remark, "as the half-pay stands in proportion to full-pay, officers, without active impulse, will not serve in time of peace."

To Sir C. M. Pole, Bart.

Hibernia, near Ushant, 4th April 1806.

My dear Admiral,

I never was in a ship so abominably organized as the Hibernia, and your plan of adding to the number of petty officers, and increasing their wages, presents itself in the most forcible light. Three captains of fore-castle, the

same number of captains of tops, after-guard, and captains of the masts, should be added, and I think as many gunners and carpenter's-mates to those now rated, as would compose a third watch; for none of the petty officers ought to be at watch and watch. Any increase of pay to the common seamen would occasion a rise in the wages of seamen employed in the merchant service, and should be well considered before it is adopted. The monstrous measure of advancing the wages of the surgeons so far above all the other classes, has raised a great clamour and expectations in all ranks, and perhaps it will be wise to make such an advance, as will just meet the advance of the half-pay which took place when I was at the Admiralty; but not one farthing more. As the half-pay stands, in proportion to full pay, officers without active impulse will not serve in time of peace. I just throw out these hints to you, that when you urge the augmentation of the number of petty officers, you may be prepared for further discussion. I well know the difficulty of making new arrangements, which tend to exhaust the public purse: but I think it fair to acknowledge, that when the half-pay was increased, I had in contemplation to add proportionably to the full pay.

Yours, very truly,

ST. VINCENT.

To Rear-Admiral Markham.

Off Ushant, 6th April 1806.

My dear Admiral,

The Santa Marguerita is in want of every thing, and should be relieved, but I have nothing to replace her. I do not like to state this to the Board, because it would have the appearance of complaining, which I have never done in the whole course of my service. Six additional good frigates are absolutely necessary, to perform the various services required of me. If you will look over the weekly accounts, you will see that both ships of the line and fri-

gates are more short of their complement than they should be. When I am enabled to send another ship of the line to Admiral Thornborough, I hope he will make a dash at the French squadron, in Rade-de-Basque. Hitherto he has never been in sight of either the Isle of Rhé or Oleron, although he must know, that the anchorage in the Pertuis d'Antioche is as safe as Spithead in any season. Unfortunately, he has fallen into the low-spirited way he was in some time ago, which is very much to be lamented, he being an officer of intelligence on whom I always had great reliance. I conclude you will make a promotion to the flag, to include Stopford, and I trust that the marines will not all be given to the aristocracy, but that Hargood and Morris will be considered. Sir Thomas Hardy is, I fear, too low down on the list.

Yours ever,

ST. VINCENT.

To Viscount Howick, First Lord of the Admiralty.

Hibernia, near Ushant, 8th. April 1806.

My dear Lord,

You will be informed, before this arrives at the Admiralty, of the measures I have taken touching the squadron under the orders of Rear-Admiral Sir Richard Strachan, which I hope will be approved; because it gives the most probable chance of intercepting Guillemont's squadron, and the Marengo; as the three divisions under Stirling, Harvey, and Strachan, will nearly spread over such parts of the Bay of Biscay (with an attention to Vigo and Ferrol) as the enemy is most likely to steer for, if bound to Rochefort, l'Orient, or Brest.

There were certainly three or four and twenty ships in Brest, a few of them very old, which I am apt to believe have been undergoing some sort of repair in the Arsenal: and I consider the two lately brought down, and far advanced in their rigging, as a proof of it.

They have at all periods sent ships to sea that our officers would not serve in; * I therefore keep as sharp a look-out, as if I were certain of their intention to push out.

The wind is now so far to the southward, they cannot budge. The *Impétueux* continues at anchor off the Black Rocks, and the *Diamond* and *l'Aigle* off the *Parquette*, and I have been close in with *Ushant* every day.

I most heartily congratulate your lordship on your excellent father's advancement in the peerage, and I hope soon to hear that you are called up by writ; for sure I am, the business of the Admiralty will not admit of your attendance in the House of Commons.

Ever, my dear Lord, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

To Viscount Howick.

Near *Ushant*, April 8, 1806.

My dear Lord,

Lieut. Faden, of the Royal Marines, now serving in the *Hibernia*, had much injustice done him, when I was at the head of the Board of Admiralty, owing to a gross misrepresentation from the Island of *Alderney*, which I was never informed of until he was placed near me in *Essex*, with a recruiting party of the *Chatham* division. The poor man lost four years' and a-half rank by this circumstance; and being a very meritorious officer, and well acquainted with the bayonet exercise, in which the flank companies in the French army so much excel all other troops, I, at his request, got him embarked on board this ship, and he has brought the marines forward in the use of that powerful weapon in a very extraordinary manner. His uncle, Major Gaum, now resident at *Pimlico*, has written a treatise upon the subject, and I hope is known to Mr. Wyndham and

* I have been surprised to see the state of the ships in which French officers would venture to sea—a sure proof that they did not understand their profession.

Gen. Fitzpatrick ; considering, as I do, that expertness in this exercise may some day or other decide the fate of the country, I beg leave to recommend this officer as a candidate for an adjutancy in the Royal Marines.*

Yours, most truly.

ST. VINCENT.

To Rear-Admiral Markham.†

Near Ushant, 9th April 1806.

My dear Admiral,

Johnny‡ will not like corned beef, I fear, after having been so long gorged with pork, which I am confident generated the dreadful infectious ulcers§ which have deprived so many men of their limbs and lives, the allowance being too large for the moderate exercise and labour they undergo. My opinion has long been that the supplies of fresh beef have been too frequent ; but a discontinuance under me would produce a clamour amongst the officers, from whence all our evils have originated, and you well know how soon seditious expressions are conveyed from the ward-room to the gun-deck. I therefore would not advise your going very deep into this measure of experiment, until we see how it is relished by the people. It is much to be apprehended the officers will condemn it *in toto*, as their tables are fur-

* It would be endless were I to point out the similar instances of Lord St. Vincent's constant attention to merit ; but this letter is valuable, inasmuch as it is an acknowledgment of error from one of the greatest men that ever presided at the Board of Admiralty. How rarely do we ever find such a concession !

† Sir Charles Pole and Admiral Markham were both lords of the Admiralty at this time.

‡ Meaning the general body of the seamen of the fleet.

§ The ulcer, when it has once got possession of a ship, is one of the most contagious and serious complaints to which seamen are liable. During the late war, the Northumberland had it to such a degree, that I think they were compelled to pay her off, that she might be cleansed from the infection. The loss of a limb was a very common occurrence from this complaint.

nished from the live cattle sent out. A revival of economy, discipline, and order, is difficult enough, and any act which might create murmur would be equally hazardous and unwise.

Your very sincere,

ST. VINCENT.

To Rear-Admiral Markham.

Hibernia, off Ushant, 9th April 1806.

My dear Admiral,

A despatch from Lord Gardner had enabled me to anticipate the necessary communication of the probable approach of Linois, to the admirals commanding the four detached squadrons, and you will perceive that I have lost no time in doing the same respecting the Prussians: an additional rose to the bed of Lord Castlereagh.

Signal after signal with guns, which have been almost incessant ever since my arrival on this station, having produced no effect, I yesterday gave out a strong injunction, both to this and the in-shore squadron, a copy of which is inclosed, and we are pretty well dressed this morning.

There are several lieutenants wanting in different ships, and I am applied to for them; but unless there is a chance of a commission, I am cautious of giving acting orders: first, that you may not think I am greedy; and next, that my young men have no money, and their *appointments create expense*.

Your steady friend,

ST. VINCENT.

To Rear-Admiral Markham.

Hibernia, near Ushant, 10th April 1806.

My dear Admiral,

The Gibraltar has joined; but the two ships of the line lately come down from the arsenal are getting on so fast, I cannot detach any more of my number; and I

expect three or four more of the enemy's ships in the course of this month, or early in May, being persuaded they have given a temporary repair to their very old ships. Captain Lawford reported to me this morning that he had observed one ship of the line under sail yesterday, probably to shift her berth, and a brig come into Camaret Bay. The whole appeared upon the *qui vive*; therefore, pray send me some frigates to watch them, for I have now the ——— only, and you know what a dull dog ——— is. When the *Latona* rejoins, I shall nail my Master Wood there, and the *Penelope* is destined to relieve *Rathbone*, for the last from port must have *Siberia*.* Pray state to Lord Howick the merit of young Mosse, clerk of the rope-yard at Portsmouth, who has been the protector of his mother and family ever since his father was killed at Copenhagen.† Had I gone again to the Admiralty, he would have filled the first vacant office of clerk of the survey.

Yours ever,

ST. VINCENT.

The following letter to Admiral Markham should be noticed. It contains a remark on the manner of stowing the *Gibraltar*, an eighty-gun ship, at that time one of the finest in our service, but which was rendered almost useless from mismanagement. I am sorry I cannot discover what the practice was which made that noble ship so *crank*; but I conclude it was too much iron ballast. She must have been brought deeper in the water than she could bear, and the effect of this is to produce an incessant rolling, and incapacity for carrying sail, which is called being *crank*.

* The in-shore berth, near the Black Rock, was so named.

† Captain of the *Monarch* of 74 guns.

The latter part of the letter, on the subject of ship timber in the Adriatic, and the idleness of the transports at Malta, with the supine indifference of the navy board, came with admirable force from Lord St. Vincent, and should have been read by his political opponents. The coppered transports at £5,000 *a year*, I have before referred to. The ship timber in the Mediterranean should make our rulers tremble. Are we never to gain wisdom by experience? Is our local and professional knowledge never to be available for the good of the empire?

To Rear-Admiral Markham.

Hibernia, near Ushant, 11th April 1806.

My dear Admiral,

After my letter of yesterday was closed, the Gibraltar exhibited such a proof of the ignorance of the late Navy Board as was quite shocking. Our fine ships, of three decks, were as steady and quiet as if in Portsmouth harbour; and the launches were sent to the Gibraltar for bullocks, and such stores as she had brought out for the squadron: when lo! she rolled so deep (her upper deck ports in the water) that the launch of the ship could not lay alongside, and in attempting to get our bullocks out, one was killed, and the others bruised in a horrid manner; and after three hours consumed in the fruitless attempt, the other launches returned to their ships, *re infectâ*. Had the late system continued much longer, our whole navy would have been ruined; and unless Lord Howick can get rid of all the old leaven, at every one of the subordinate boards, Nichols will be traversed, all his objects frustrated, and he will resign in dudgeon.

These are not times to practise arrangements ; for the extraordinary character who governs France may build two hundred sail of the line in four years ; and the forests he succeeds to on the borders of the Adriatic, are so *à portée* to the magnificent arsenal of Venice, that wonders may be achieved in it. What our Navy Board has been about, in neglecting to bring the trees, which were fallen, away, I know not ; for there were at Malta, and many other parts of the Mediterranean, abundance of large copper-bottom transports, with raft ports, doing nothing.

I have got the gout, and apprehend a trimming fit.

Yours ever,

ST. VINCENT.

To Earl Spencer.

Hibernia, within the B. Rocks, 13th April 1806.

My dear Lord,

I cannot express, in sufficiently strong terms, the sense I feel of your lordship's and Lord Howick's attention to me ; and although I confess that the becoming an Elder brother of the Trinity House has always been an object of my ambition, I have a considerable degree of doubt whether I can with the delicacy due to Lord Howick (not only on account of the office he fills, but from a long uninterrupted friendship with his excellent father and himself) deprive his lordship of what appears to be his birthright. I am in your lordship's hands, and request you will decide for me.

Your lordship's very faithful,

ST. VINCENT.

The first paragraph in the following letter to Admiral Markham, adds proof upon proof of Lord St. Vincent's undeniable claim to the honour of originating the Breakwater in Plymouth Sound.

The captain referred to was much disliked for

his rough and uncouth manners. He has been long dead ; but while I preserve the vituperation for the admonition of others, there can be no good purpose answered by giving the name.

To Rear-Admiral Markham.

Hibernia, under Ushant, 15th April 1806.

My dear Admiral,

I rejoice to learn that you are going to Parliament for power to make Plymouth Sound a secure place of anchorage for our fleets in all weathers ; for on that, and the carrying my great plan of an arsenal, between Pitcher's yard and Greenhithe, into execution, depends the preservation of our country from the all-powerful empire across the water.

Those poor young men for whom Captain Gosselin* has applied, should not long be left exposed to the ill-humour of Captain ———, who will appear in an odd shape, when our correspondence, upon the subject of twenty men being stated in his weekly account absent without leave, comes before the Board. The real fact is, he was not present at the payment of the ———, nor did he go on board after it until he was directed to put to sea, and join this squadron. In the interval these men contrived to get on shore. We accompanied him within the Black Rocks this morning, and placed the ——— under the command of Captain Lawford.

The ways of the two last Boards pass all understanding ; and it is said that C——s did not believe that the two French squadrons had slipped out of Brest, for a great length of time after they were gone. He is a very singular character.

Yours ever,

ST. VINCENT.

* The present Vice-admiral Thomas Le Marchant Gosselin, a most gallant and highly respected officer, and one whom I am proud to number among my old shipmates in the Crown in the East-Indies in 1789.

To Viscount Howick.

Hibernia, 24th April 1806.

My dear Lord,

How unfortunate it is, that the fine gallant fellow,* whose letters I enclose, sinks under responsibility ; which, in truth, I have found to be the case with almost every valuable officer in the navy : Boscawen was an exception to it. Permit me to suggest to your lordship, that orders from the Admiralty for Sir Richard Strachan, to replenish with the utmost dispatch, and join me upon this rendez-vous, with a view of relieving the Vice-Admiral, should be lodged at Plymouth ; for if he continues in this languid state, it will be all over with him.

Yours, most truly,

ST. VINCENT.

To Sir C. M. Pole.

Hibernia, near Ushant, 29th April 1806.

My dear Sir,

Young Seymour seems to possess all the good qualities of his father. * * * * This is such a dreary, barren, Siberia scene, as would have blunted the edge of his ambition. I have therefore sent him to Thornborough, where there is somewhat of a dash attempted daily, and if the Vice-Admiral recovers his health, I shall look forward to brilliant scenes as the summer season advances.

Yours, most truly,

ST. VINCENT.

To Sir C. M. Pole, Bart.

Near Ushant, 1st May 1806.

My dear Sir Charles,

It seems probable that France will compel Prussia to join in an attempt to shut the Sound against us ; in which event the passage of the Belt must be immediately resorted

* The late Admiral Sir Edward Thornborough, G.C.B.

to. I therefore enclose a letter from a man I have a very good opinion of, and wish well to, who may be made exceedingly useful in such an emergency. You and Captain Nichols may probably recollect his being employed with other masters in buoying the Belt, when you returned from the Baltic by that passage. Lord Howick opened the measure of bettering the condition of the officers and seamen of the Fleet admirably, and the poor —— exposed his ignorance and imbecility completely. When you issue the new proclamation for the distribution of prizes, do not forget to include the master-caulker as a petty officer; for, next to the carpenter, he is the most useful man in that line.

Yours, truly,

ST. VINCENT.

*To Captain Hallowell.**

Hibernia, near Ushant, 11th May 1806.

Sir,

Although I have had sufficient experience of the naval world to be totally regardless of the opinions of a very great majority of the principal persons who compose it, I cannot help expressing my surprise and indignation that you, of all men living, should for a moment have entertained the unworthy suspicion contained in your letter of the 20th ultimo; my conduct touching Sir N—— T—— having been the very reverse of that you have imputed to

Your humble servant,

ST. VINCENT.

* Having had an unfortunate disagreement with the officer to whom the above letter is addressed, I shall surely be deemed impartial when I say, that although, in the above instance, he may have erred, yet it was under a generous impulse; for a more upright, honourable, and undeviating character, I never met with. His actions, which I have related in the Naval History, speak for themselves. He subsequently took the name of Carew, and died a vice-admiral, and a knight-commander of the Bath.

CHAPTER XIII.

Speech of his Royal Highness the Duke of Clarence, in favour of Lord St. Vincent in the House of Peers—Lord Sidmouth's reply—Mr. Jeffery's attack on his lordship in the House of Commons.—February 1807. Earl St. Vincent's speech on the abolition of the Slave-trade.—February 1808. Sir Francis Burdett brings forward his motion relative to Sir Home Popham—Observations.—Earl St. Vincent's speech on the Convention of Cintra, and capitulation of the Russian squadron—His last appearance in the House, 1810. Speech on the retreat of Sir John Moore, and the invasion of the Peninsula—Conclusion of his lordship's parliamentary history.

ON the 15th February 1806, his Royal Highness the Duke of Clarence (his late Majesty William IV.) observed, that on a former evening a subject was agitated, which was of such a nature as that, not only on public grounds but from private feelings, he was induced again to call the attention of their lordships to it. His royal highness alluded to the circumstance of his noble friend, Earl St. Vincent, having inquired, whether it was the intention of his Majesty's present ministers to institute any inquiry into his conduct while he held the high situation he had lately filled under his Majesty? His royal highness had known the noble earl twenty-

six years, and though, in some points, he had had occasion to differ from him, yet it was always with the deepest regret; but, while at the head of the Admiralty, the conduct of his noble friend was such that he should defend it if necessary. Seeing a noble viscount (Sidmouth) in his place, who was lately at the head of his Majesty's councils, and at present held a high situation therein, he would beg leave to ask whether the noble viscount would or would not say, that so far from its being the intention of his Majesty's present ministers to institute any inquiry into the conduct of the noble earl, relative to his administration of naval affairs, there existed no ground for setting on foot an inquiry into the conduct of one of the most honourable, dignified, and illustrious naval heroes of this country.

Lord Sidmouth in reply said, he could not tell how he might be warranted by parliamentary usage and practice, to answer in his place queries like these put to him by the illustrious duke; he would, however, state, with respect to the particular question put to him by the illustrious duke, he had no hesitation in saying, that he should belie every feeling, both private and public, which he possessed, with respect to the noble earl, and which all those who knew his character and conduct must feel, if he were to express a belief that there existed any ground or reason whatsoever for inquiry into the official conduct

of the noble earl; on the contrary, he thought him every way entitled to the approbation and gratitude of the country.

The Duke of Clarence replied, that he never yet heard, within the walls of that house, any answer which had given him such complete satisfaction, as well in a public as in a private point of view.

If the king's ministers held such sentiments respecting Lord St. Vincent, there were others, both in and out of parliament, who at that time bore a rancorous and malignant hatred against him—some from disappointed expectations—some from loss of situations, for which they had been found disqualified by their habits and education, or unworthy to hold from a want of integrity, which the commissioners of naval inquiry had exposed to public view. I will not pretend to say that Mr. Jeffery was influenced by any corrupt or sinister motive in bringing forward his motion on the 28th January 1806, of which he had given previous notice; but I much fear he was urged on and stimulated by those who were smarting under the sting of disappointed ambition or detected fraud. The honourable gentleman stated his object to be, an inquiry into the conduct of Lord St. Vincent, as first lord of the Admiralty. He indulged himself in much invective against his lordship, for endeavouring to procrastinate the inquiry by covering the table

of the house with papers. An order of that house had decreed that the papers should be printed. This order Mr. Jeffery wished should be discharged, and the reason he assigned was, that if printed, they would occasion delay and expense, and he was quite certain the House would not read them. Mr. Jeffery was ably answered, and severely castigated, for accusing the House by anticipation of neglecting its duty. Admiral Markham, Mr. Tierney, and Mr. Peter Moore, each read him a lecture which must have made the honourable mover feel uncomfortable, to say the least of it. Mr. Peter Moore commented with merited severity on the wish of Mr. Jeffery to put forth his own charges to the House, and to the world, and to suppress the answers and justification of the accused party.

Mr. Jeffery ultimately withdrew his motion for non-printing, and, on the 23d of April, again renewed his complaints in the House of Commons, occasioned by delay of printing the papers. He then gave notice, that on the 6th May he should bring forward his charge against Lord St. Vincent; and Lord Howick replied, that every thing would be done by the friends of the noble earl to facilitate the inquiry.

On the 5th February 1807, Earl St. Vincent, in his place in the House of Lords, gave his sentiments on the Slave Abolition Bill brought in by Lord Grenville. "He deprecated the measure,

which, if passed, would, he was satisfied, have the effect of transferring British capital to other countries, which would not be disposed to abandon such a productive branch of trade. As to the humanity, so much contended for, it would be well if noble lords reflected upon this question, whether humanity really was consulted by the abolition. If it were, their arguments would be well founded; but from his own experience he was enabled to state, that the West-India islands were Paradise itself to the negroes, compared with their native country. Knowing this, which, upon inquiry, it was in the power of any noble lord to ascertain, he was surprised at the proposition before the House, and, considering the high character and intelligence of the noble proposer, he declared he could account in no other way for his having brought it forward, but by supposing that some Ohi-man had cast his spell upon him." (*A laugh.*)

On the 9th February Lord Walsingham brought up the report of the bill for the abolition of the slave trade, when Earl St. Vincent said he would take that last opportunity to enter his protest against the adoption of the measure, the consequences of which, he was persuaded, would prove fatal to the best interests of the country. As soon as France made peace with us (and she would hasten a pacification in consequence of the passing of this bill), her first object would be to get com-

plete possession of the slave trade; and if she succeeded in that point, it would soon appear that she had got possession of an engine that would work the downfall of the naval superiority of this country. Such was his conviction, and he uttered it now for the last time. His lordship then withdrew immediately from the house.

Whatever may have been my own opinions and feelings on the question of the slave trade, and the ultimate consequences of its abolition, I have deemed it my duty to place on record those of Earl St. Vincent on this great moral and national measure, even though they may be at variance with the popular ones which now prevail, and may in some degree call in question the political foresight of the holder of them.

On the 8th February 1808, when the House of Lords was debating on the result of the expedition to Copenhagen, Lord St. Vincent was violently opposed to it, on the ground of its impolicy. His lordship thus expressed himself: "Supposing, for an instant, Zealand and the Danish navy to be in the possession of Denmark; and the French to be in possession of Holstein, it would be even more practicable to invade this country from Boulogne than to invade Zealand from Holstein. As to the situation of the Danish fleet, it seemed to him to be exactly what it was eight-and-forty years ago, when he first knew it."

Still, with all this strong assertion of his lordship, and notwithstanding the high respect I must ever entertain for his talent and discernment, I do contend, knowing what I know, and having seen the Danish fleet and arsenal at Copenhagen, and coupling this with the vast and rapid strides of Napoleon towards the whole mastery of Europe, if not of the world, that we should have been criminally supine had we not seized that powerful auxiliary, and snatched it out of the hands of Bonaparte. The fault we committed at Copenhagen was giving it up too soon : the place was ours by the laws of war, and we should have kept it until the war was concluded.

On the 10th of January 1809, the parliament was opened by commission. The commissioners were, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lord Chancellor, the Earl Camden, and the Duke of Montrose. The purport and substance of the speech from the Throne was, that his Majesty had determined on a vigorous prosecution of the war, as the only means of obtaining a permanent peace. The proposals sent by the Emperor Napoleon from Erfurth, after his battles on the Danube, were referred to only to show, that they were rejected because one of these conditions was the abandonment of the cause of Spain. The convention of Cintra was spoken of in no very flattering terms, although it was admitted that by its means the kingdom of Portugal had been freed

from the presence of a French army. Still some of the articles his Majesty could not assent to. Among others, I conclude, must have been the capitulation of the Russian fleet in the Tagus to Sir Charles Cotton.

Earl St. Vincent, who spoke after the Earl of Bridgewater and Lord Suffield, said, that the address just read was such as no man who had a veneration for his sovereign or a love for his country would assent to. Some parts of it, which went to express a determined hostility to the enemy, and a vigorous prosecution of the war, all must approve; but when he adverted to the manner in which the war had been conducted on the peninsula of Europe, it was wholly impossible not to express sorrow and indignation. He called it the greatest disgrace which had befallen Great Britain since the days of the revolution; and this he declared, whether he took into consideration the manner in which the war was carried on in Portugal, or the way in which our troops had been sent there. Merit was attributed to ministers for the hiring of transports: but the public ought to be undeceived on that head. There was not a tittle of merit in the case; it was only going into the market, and offering a little more than the market price, and transports were to be had in abundance. He wished, however, to notice the important services to which these transports were applied: "Why, truly," said his lordship, "they were at

last applied to convey the rascally ruffians whom Junot commanded, to that part of France which was nearest to Spain, that they might, as speedily as possible, be again brought into action with more effect against our own soldiers ; so that these devils," added his lordship, "are at this moment harassing the rear of our retreating army." The impolicy of sending troops to Portugal he had always seen, but the result of the war there he was disgusted with. In fact, it would seem as if ministers had not even a geographical knowledge of the country through which they were to pass. A "heaven-born" minister, just after he came into power, asked whether Port Mahon was in Europe! And the persons then in power manifested the same local ignorance, when they sent an army to traverse a wild and inhospitable country at the approach of a rainy season, to drink new wines, and to be overwhelmed with fatigue and disease. So little confidence did he place in these men that he was decidedly of opinion that, unless they were removed, the country was lost. The convention of Cintra excited both alarm and indignation in the country. He condemned the cold-blooded treaty which gave up the contest for ships of war of an enemy,* upon a compromise so unworthy the nation's character. "There was a time," said the noble earl, "when such old-fashioned words as *sink, burn, and destroy*, were understood and

* This refers to the Russian squadron in the Tagus, 1807.

exercised ; but now we are to be ships' husbands, to bargain and barter, instead of taking possession by battle, by bravery, and by valour : we are to hold ships in trust by contract, and not in right by conquest."

Some other observations his lordship made, on the appointment of generals to command our armies ; but as they might be supposed invidious, I shall not repeat them ; feeling the less disposed to do so as I differ so widely from his lordship on that subject. With respect to councils of war, which he mentioned as having immediately preceded the battle of Vimiera, I entirely concur. We had discarded them from the navy since the days of Byng : why they should have been continued, or even tolerated by such an undaunted general as the Duke of Wellington, it is difficult to say.

Lord St. Vincent referred, with great indignation, to the result of the court of inquiry on the affair of Vimiera, and considered its decision a blot upon the country. "At Vimiera we had gained a victory, and at the moment our soldiers were flushed with conquest, recourse was had to a council of war. Upon what principle such an expedient was resorted to, he, for one, accustomed to other modes, could not account. Just the same opinion he entertained of the court of inquiry. It was a shield to ward off investigation from ministers themselves. But he trusted their lordships would not be prevented from making a scrupulous

inquiry in their own way. He knew the character of the Portuguese exceedingly well. Excepting the people in the city of Lisbon, they were as brave as any on the continent of Europe, and, officered with British soldiers, would have presented an undaunted front to Frenchmen. Why was not that expedient made use of? Ministers ought to have known their value, and if they did not, their ignorance was inexcusable. If that House did its duty, they would immediately proceed to the foot of the throne, and there tell the sovereign the bold truth, that if he did not remove them, he would lose the country. These were the sentiments of his heart, and he spoke them as a solemn duty which he found himself bound to express. It was probably the last time he should trouble their lordships." The noble earl then said, "I wish your lordships a good night;"—and as he uttered these words, he rose, and walked out of the house, with the determination not to enter it again:—not, I believe, from feeling any soreness or ill-humour at the contradiction he met with, but from the advances of age and infirmity.

I only find him in the House of Lords once more during the remainder of his life. The occasion was, the King's speech, and the address to the throne, on the opening of the session in January 1810. He felt highly indignant at the great events of the two preceding years—the capture of the Danish fleet, the expedition to Walcheren, the

sending of Sir John Moore to Spain, and afterwards Sir Arthur Wellesley, with inadequate forces. The retreat on Corunna, the convention of Cintra, and the "*capitulation*" of the Russian squadron in the Tagus, were subjects on which he seemed to dwell with tenacious acrimony, as so many public wrongs, and sacrifices of human blood and treasure and of national honour.

We in some degree anticipate the course of events by concluding in this place the parliamentary history.

On the 23d of January 1810, when his Majesty's speech from the throne was given by the Lords Commissioners, Lord St. Vincent rose and said :—" My Lords, when I addressed a few observations, at the commencement of the last session of Parliament, to your lordships, I thought my age and infirmities would preclude me from ever again presenting myself to your consideration ; but, my lords, such have been the untoward and calamitous events which have occurred since that period that I am once more induced, if my strength will permit, to trouble your lordships with a few observations. Indeed we have wonderful and extraordinary men in these days ; we have ingenuity enough to blazon with the finest colours ; to sound with the trumpet and the drum ; in fact, to varnish over—the greatest calamities of the country, and endeavour to prove that our greatest misfortunes ought to be consi-

dered as our greatest blessings. Such was their course of proceeding after the disastrous convention of Cintra ; and now, in his Majesty's speech, they have converted another disaster into a new triumph. They talk of the glorious victory of Talavera—a victory which led to no advantage, and had the consequences of a defeat. The enemy took prisoners the sick and the wounded, and our own troops were obliged, finally, precipitately to retreat. I do not mean to condemn the conduct of the officers employed either in Spain or Walcheren ; I believe they did their duty. There is no occasion to wonder at the awful events which have occurred ; they are caused by the weakness, infatuation, and stupidity of ministers. I will maintain, my lords, that we owe all our disasters and disgrace to the ignorance and incapacity of his Majesty's ministers. But what could the nation expect from men who came into office under the mask of vile hypocrisy, and have maintained their places by imposture and delusion ? Look at the whole of their conduct. The first instance of the pernicious influence of their principles, was their treatment of a country at peace with us (Denmark). In a state of profound peace they attacked her, unprepared, and brought her into a state of inveterate and open hostility. Their next achievement was to send one of the ablest men that ever commanded an army, into the centre of Spain, unprovided with any requi-

site for such a dangerous march. If Sir John Moore had not acted according to his own judgment, in the perilous situation in which he had been wantonly exposed, every man of that army had been lost to the country : by his transcendent judgment, however, that army made one of the ablest retreats recorded in the page of history, and while he saved the remnant of his valiant troops, his own life was sacrificed in the cause of his country. And what tribute had his Majesty's ministers paid to his valued memory ? what reward conferred for such eminent services ? Why, my lords, even in this place, insidious aspersions were cast on his character ; people were employed to calumniate his conduct. But, in spite of all the minions and dependents of administration, the character of that general will always be revered as one of the ablest men this country ever saw. After this abortive enterprize, another, equally foolish, unsuccessful, and ruinous, was carried into execution ; another general was sent with troops into the heart of the peninsula, under similar circumstances, and the glorious victory (of Talavera) was purchased with our best blood and treasure. But what shall I say, my lords, when I come to mention the expedition to Walcheren ? Why I think it almost useless to say one word on the subject ; it was ill-advised, ill-planned ; and even with partial successes, it was doubtful whether the ultimate

object was not impracticable. It is high time the Parliament should adopt strong measures, or the voice of the country will sound like thunder in their ears. The conduct of his Majesty's Government has led to the most frightful disasters, which are nowhere exceeded in the annals of history. The country is in that state which makes peace inevitable; it will be compelled to make peace, however disadvantageous, because it will be unable to maintain a war so shamefully misconducted, and so disastrous in its consequences."

The noble earl, after showing the injuries which must befall the shipping interest in case of a peace, when almost every ship in the river would have a broom at her mast-head [this is to denote that a ship is to be sold], concluded by submitting a question to the first lord of the Admiralty, whether it was in contemplation to make a dock, for the future reception of our ships at Northfleet? which he recommended as a judicious measure.

With respect to this question, Lord Mulgrave replied that it was under consideration, but he knew not what the result would be. With respect to the other subjects of his lordship's speech, they required serious and impartial investigation.

Were I to approve every part of the noble earl's speech on this last occasion of his addressing the House, I should falsify my own statements in a former work. The convention of Cin-

tra was certainly considered as very expedient at the time, and even at this moment is not condemned. The retreat of Sir John Moore, and its disastrous consequences, were not fairly imputable to ministers. A gallant officer, who covered the rear of our army on that memorable occasion, has assured me that the retreat was necessary, but that there was not the least occasion to have conducted it with so much haste, loss, and precipitation. The seizing of the Danish fleet at Copenhagen I must ever uphold, as a just and necessary measure ; while the expedition to Walcheren I shall always regret : not because the result was unfavourable, but because the thing itself was ill-advised, and bad from the beginning. I observed to Lord Wellesley, on the day I sailed with him from Spithead to convey him to Cadiz, that “ the fleet then getting under way for the Scheldt should be going with us to Spain.” His lordship’s answer, to the best of my recollection, was, “ I think so too, Sir ; but his Majesty’s Government have judged otherwise.”

The reverses which succeeded to the battle of Talavera, in some measure justified this remark. Had the army which embarked for the Scheldt, in July 1809, arrived at Cadiz with the Donegal, which was at the very hour, at the very moment the salutes were firing for that victory, it is most probable that the Spanish campaign would have been gloriously ended in the following year.

As regards the predictions of the Earl of St. Vincent respecting the condition of our merchant shipping at the conclusion of the war, they have been but too fully verified. For the rest, some allowance must be made for the virulence of party spirit. In fact, it must be confessed, that he who gives himself up blindly to one side or the other, will inevitably be led into error; and the author who adopts such prejudice, is most unfit for the task of writing either history or biography.

With respect to the question of forming a dock-yard at Northfleet, in preference to the one at Sheerness, which has cost such immense sums, I can only say, that nothing could be worse chosen or worse managed than fixing on that dilapidated spot in the Isle of Sheppy, to renew the naval dock-yard. Very little of the old works being retained, a mere trifle, if any thing, was gained by it; and although I cannot approve of Northfleet as a naval station, I have no hesitation in saying that the proper place for a dock-yard would have been on the northern side of the Medway, opposite to Sheerness. Every sailor knows the inconvenience to which Sheerness is subject, with strong north-westerly winds, particularly with spring-tides, when ships are coming in and going out of dock. There is often so much sea going on the jetties and walls, that work is entirely suspended; while, on the other side, the water is perfectly smooth.

CHAPTER XIV.

To Rear-admiral Markham—Two to the same—Two to Lord Howick
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 Lord Howick.

THE following series of letters were all written during the time Lord St. Vincent held the command of the Channel fleet. They show the cares and anxieties attendant on that important post in war-time; and the observations they contain are all founded on such quick-sighted sagacity and long experience, and supported by such acute reasoning, that they will form a manual for any future admiral commanding there.

To Rear-Admiral Markham.

Hibernia, near Ushant, May 16th, 1806.

My dear Admiral,

My plans are not a little deranged by the measure of sending Sir Richard Strachan and his squadron off the Canaries, which is certainly a wise one. I had proposed to relieve the *Revenge*, *Dragon*, and *Warrior*, part of Admiral Stirling's squadron; the *Malta* and *Achilles* which have been some time in course of pay; part of Admiral Thornborough's, and the *Princess Royal* under the same circum-

stances, one of Admiral Harvey's; and to have added the other ship to my own squadron, which would have brought me within one of the force of the enemy. From a long knowledge of Sir John Warren, I am of opinion he will cruise as long as his water and stock of provisions will last: the more especially if he should, by accident, learn the success which the Fame and her associates met with by the range they took after stopping at Madeira. Sir John, who has a most impatient spirit, will be restless and clamorous, on account of the corporal of marines he has in confinement, and the absurd conduct of his captain of marines; and I propose to send the St. George to relieve the Revenge; the more necessary, because she left Falmouth fifty tons short of her quantity of water, and must have been some time on her ground-tier. Both ships of the line and frigates, stay much longer in port, than they did when I commanded the fleet six years ago; and I understand, if they send a report of their progress to Admiral —— at nine o'clock every morning, no questions are asked. Any failure in this ceremony, is sure to provoke a sharp rebuke, however diligent the captain may be in essentials. The said admiral* is like Lord B—— and Admiral G——, a compound of paper and packthread. I can readily account for the employment of my unworthy *élève*, from his connexion with —— . He has no pretensions to any marks of favour, beyond those of —— or —— . Happily for the country, he is appointed to a command wherein it is not probable he will have an opportunity to disgrace it; and he is up to the Americans in lie, trick, and evasion.

Ignorant that Rear-Admiral Louis would be in the way to relieve Thornborough, in case of Sir J. Warren not arriving in due time, I named Sir Samuel Hood to Lord Howick, who cannot fix on a fitter man, and if you make a promo-

* In reading this letter I can now readily account for twelve naval officers dining with "the admiral" in Wimpole-street, "not one of whom could give Lord St. Vincent a good word."

tion, it will indent better still. Sir J. ——— will intrigue you for a chief command on the coast of Portugal, with the circuit of the Azores, Canaries, and Cape de Verdes: he wants money, and will not be contented with the small pittance likely to be the lot of a puisne flag-officer in this fleet.

You say nothing of Osborne,* who, I hope, is not to be abandoned. Whenever you judge any instruction upon his subject necessary, pray let me know.

Yours most truly,

ST. VINCENT.

To Rear-Admiral Markham.

Near Ushant, 17th May 1806.

My dear Admiral,

In my last letter to Tucker, I mooted my going into port when the *Hibernia* should come in course of payment, and I proposed running up to Spithead in a frigate. Upon reflection, I think it will be better to proceed thither in the *Hibernia* at once; as by that means I may get back to her by the time she is filled up and paid. Although the example I set six years ago, in the best mode of cruising upon Brest, has not been followed by any of my successors, and the in-shore squadron has most shamefully abandoned the station assigned to it, as I will explain when we meet, I think the system is now established on such principles, it cannot be departed from; the more especially as Sir Charles Cotton has been witness to the certainty of keeping hold of Ushant in any wind or weather, by taking shelter under that island in an easterly gale, and profiting of the tides (which are as advantageous as about Scilly) in other circumstances. The squadron before Rochefort may be supplied with water and provisions from Plymouth, until the ap-

* The late Admiral Edward Oliver Osborne, an officer of great talent and merit. He went out fourth lieut. of the Crown with Admiral Cornwallis to the East-Indies in 1789.

proach of the autumnal equinox. The two convoys which have been recently sent, will make them hold out the month of July, before which time it will be no longer necessary to continue the squadron off Cape Finisterre. In my judgment the squadron before Rochefort should be strengthened, for it is possible that ships may get into the Pertuis d'Antioche, *malgré* the efforts of our squadron, and the tables turned upon it. These are the reveries of

Your steady friend,

ST. VINCENT.

The following two letters allude to a then recent debate in Parliament. The "sneaking cur" has been long dead. He was a naval officer of rank, and must have made the *amende honorable*, as I met with him at Rochetts after the war was concluded.

To Rear-Admiral Markham.

Near Ushant, 19th May 1806.

My dear Admiral,

I thank you kindly for the support you gave to my fair game in the House of Commons. ——— is a sneaking cur; I had much rather he had taken the line that Percival and Canning did, who seem to have been inoculated with the malignant venom of ———. I hope Lord Howick will sweep all the spiders from the Navy Board, or it will not do.

Yours most truly,

ST. VINCENT.

To Viscount Howick.

Hibernia, off Ushant, 19th May 1806.

My dear Lord,

Many thanks to you for your justification of my conduct in the House of Commons. I will be much obliged to you to make them to Messrs. Fox, Tierney, &c.

I have folios of grievances from Sir J. T. Duckworth. I think him very unreasonable, and have told him that an annuity of £1,000 per annum is a more substantial reward than an Irish peerage—the utmost he could expect, and for that he must have waited until a vacancy happened.

If the French squadron is not victualled for a longer time than the intelligence goes to, they must return to Europe with all speed, or to N. America, for they can get no salt meat in the Brazils, and I advise your lordship to continue the squadrons cruizing on the stations assigned.

Ever yours,

ST. VINCENT.

*To Viscount Howick.*Hibernia, between Ushant and the Black Rocks,
20th May 1806.

My dear Lord.

Soon after I had dispatched my letter of yesterday, I received one from ——— enclosing a copy of his to your lordship, which I am much ashamed of. It is an error all the way through, mixed with cant and hypocrisy. Had I been in your situation, I would not have recommended him for an English peerage, long as I have regarded him; and I entreat your lordship not to have the smallest degree of consideration for me in your conduct towards him; for although I acknowledge him to be a valuable officer, I can do very well without him.

I am much in want of another small cutter for an advice-boat, and have applied to the Board for one that is offered.

These vessels so employed are much better without lieutenants,—who are generally ignorant of cutter-sailing, act the important, and put the masters out of humour.

Yours most truly,

ST. VINCENT.

The observations contained in the following letter will apply to any period of our service since 1806. “Frippery and gimcrack” were introduced about that period. The *polishing* system was carried to a shameful extent. I knew one captain of a guard-ship who employed his black-list men in polishing the breech of his main-deck guns, and the ring-bolts on the deck. In short, from that day to the end of the war, every thing was to be polished; brass guns and howitzers, and swivels on the capstan: it was the fashion. The soldiers left it off about the time we began it. What an immense improvement in the condition of our troops was the browning of their gun-barrels, and abolishing the use of tallow-candles and flour in ornamenting their heads! This practice was also common in the navy, with officer as well as marine; and there are few of the old school who do not look back with amazement at the patient endurance of a young midshipman, in having his forehead pummelled with a stick of hard pomatum to make his hair lie back, or rather to stand on end. One lieutenant in the navy, dressed for court, had a very scanty head of hair “filled” with grease

and meal, till his queue was as thick as his arm. The crowd and pressure were immense at the drawing-room, the ribbon came off, and an unfortunate French gentleman, who was jammed up by his side, received the whole of the contents on a new court dress—"Mais, Monsieur, vous avez abîmé mon habit!"—a just retribution, for the nasty invention came from his own country!

To Rear-Admiral Markham.

Hibernia, under Ushant, 22d May 1806.

My dear Admiral:

The Captain of the — might have been a good commander of a Guinea-ship, although he is neither seaman nor soldier. He told Bowen that he was sounding with his master the day before yesterday, on the very rocks he ran upon. I hope you will turn his ship's company over to the Lavinia, and when the — is repaired and manned, send her to the coast of Guinea; for he is fit for nothing else.* Not that I think — free from blame, for making the signal to reconnoitre Brest in such hazy weather, that the Long Marks could not be seen. This arose from a gossip between him and Captain L——, who staid nearly three hours with him, when he ought to have returned to me immediately: his launch and two rowing boats having been left here, to assist in getting one hundred tons of water out

* The name is here concealed, obviously from the best motives; but the character of the man is accurately drawn. He died very rich, and left a large portion of his property to the child of some needy mendicant with whom he became acquainted. He had, when I knew him on a foreign station, an awkward habit of keeping the best wine at the head of the table, and an inferior sort for his own officers, who honoured him with their company. He was a man holding the enviable command of a British ship of the line, with the soul of a shoe-black.

of the *Ville de Paris*, which we achieved in four hours to a minute. I was much at a loss to account for the *Ville de Paris* having carried away her foreyard, and we learned from the lieutenant, yesterday, that it was actually done by keeping the lee fore-brace fast in tacking, and which broke short by the force of the men on the weather-brace. She is now shifting a fore-topmast, and how the one she is lowering has been sprung is unaccountable, for we have had very moderate weather and smooth water ever since she joined. The *Egyptienne* carried out four topmasts to Admiral Harvey's squadron, the other day, and if we continue to throw away topmasts at this rate, the forests of the north will not furnish an adequate supply. There is great lack of seamanship in the service, and the young people now coming up, are for the most part frippery and gimcrack. I wish we could revive the old school.

Yours ever,

ST. VINCENT.

To Viscount Howick.

Near Ushant. 2d June 1806.

My dear Lord :

Not having Mr. Clark's treatise on naval tactics with me, I am unable to give you a detailed opinion, upon the influence it has had in the several victories our fleets have obtained over those of France, Spain, and Holland, since its publication. I would not for the world subtract from the merits of Mr. Clark, which I have always admitted ; yet on referring to the encyclopedia, wherein are copious extracts from the pamphlet, I perceive evident signs of compilation from *Père le Hoste*, down to *Viscount de Grenier*. In truth, it would be difficult for the ablest seaman and tactician, to write upon the subject, without running into one or all the French authors.

Inclosed your lordship will receive the best judgment I can form, on the claim Mr. Clark has, of any merit in the

battles of the 1st June, and the attempts on the preceding days by Lord Howe; the battles of Camperdown and Trafalgar: that fought off Cape *St. Vincent* is *totally out of the question*.

I do not see, however, that Ministers can withhold some reward to Mr. Clark, after what has been lavished by former administrations on Dr. C——— S———, and other
* * * *

Yours ever,

ST. VINCENT.

The foregoing letter shows Lord St. Vincent's opinion of Clark's naval tactics, in which I entirely concur. "Were you at all guided by Clark on the 14th February my lord?" said I to him one day. "Sir, I never once thought of him," was the reply. Lord Hawke, when he ran out of the line and took the *Poder*, sickened me of tactics; the Admiralty wanted to disgrace him for it, but George the Second saw his merit and rewarded it.

To Rear-Admiral Markham.

Off Ushant, 4th June 1806.

My dear Admiral,

There must be a great consumption of men in Admiral Young's department by desertion, and the shameful manner in which men get invalided, from that infamously conducted hospital, or the Windsor Castle would have been with me long ago. A letter goes to your secretary of this day's date, requesting that she and the London may be hurried, and if you give me the *Superb* and *Spencer*, I may be able to keep up the four squadrons, *malgré* the counteractions of the captains in continuing to keep their ships in

port double the time prescribed. Pray deliver me from Capt. —, who is a very dangerous man, and I shrewdly suspect, the diabolical report of the capture of the inshore squadron, and my having been killed, originated with him. If an arrangement cannot be made for the continuance of old Bowen, without prejudice to him as Commissioner of the Transport Board, I will dispense altogether with a first captain. My nephew has become a very competent secretary, and the parties I have to select from, are swollen with such high and mighty characters, I cannot, and will not submit to the caprice of any of them. The decision made by Sir J. D— is a great deliverance.

Yours ever,

ST. VINCENT.

To Rear-Admiral Markham.

Hibernia, at Sea, 6th July 1806.

My dear Admiral,

Just before I left town Captain Monk put into my hand two manuscript memoirs: one relating to the defective and changeable state of the discipline of the navy; to which he is perfectly justified in attributing the disorders which have afflicted the service during the last twenty-five years; and I should say more in favour of his system, had he not artfully introduced a note of reference, with a view to obtain a favourable report from me. The other relates to the establishment of a marine artillery. You have probably read both these papers, but lest you should not, I send them to you.

Most faithfully yours,

ST. VINCENT.

To Viscount Howick.

Near Ushant, 13th July 1806.

My dear Lord,

I have great satisfaction in acquainting you, that Captain Osborne is exactly the man I wanted; his caution, compounded with my quickness and promptitude, will, I hope, be the means of conducting the operations of the fleet to the honour and advantage of the country, and the repose of the cabinet.

Upon the junction of the Princess Royal, I informed Captain Carthew Reynolds that I had communicated his letter to your lordship, and had assured you that he was an able and gallant officer, which he most certainly is, and a very stout seaman, every inch of him, into the bargain.*

Yours most truly,

ST. VINCENT.

To Rear-Admiral Markham.

Hibernia, near Ushant, 26th July 1806.

My dear Admiral,

If Lord Howick does not get rid of this vile institution of *sub-lieutenant*,† all the youth of the service will become contaminated. The commanders of gun-brigs lord it over them, and they are soon driven out of his mess, and mixed with the warrant-officers, by which means they become professed drunkards. George Grey gives me a dread-

* He was indeed all that Lord St. Vincent says of him. His loss, with that of the St. George and Defiance, in the year 1812, will be found related in the Naval History.

† The rank of sub-lieutenant existed in the navy but for a very short period. It was a scandalous and ruinous trick played upon young officers, subjecting them to all the expense, with only half the income of lieutenants. Most of them were placed in gun-brigs and cutters, where they became drunkards and lost to the service.

ful account of those in the North Sea, but they appear to be worse to the westward.

Yours ever,
ST. VINCENT.

To Rear-Admiral Markham.

29th July 1806.

My dear Admiral,

Amidst the various occupations I have had in this busy scene (for I found the fleet in such a disorderly state, that my whole time has been employed in correcting abuses and negligent slovenly habits), I have omitted to write you accounts of the schooners, which are no more like *Bermudian vessels** than they are like Indian prows; and if any more are built, Surveyor Rule must have nothing to do with them, but the Mudian builders left to their own discretions. In fact, they are a plague and burthen to all who have them under their orders.

Yours ever,
ST. VINCENT.

To Viscount Howick.

21st July 1806.

My dear Lord,

Captain Hurd joined us yesterday in the Ranger revenue-cutter, and is gone into the bay of Brest, with all the means he required from me. He should be placed at the head of your hydrographical department, which is in the most shameful disorder, and has been so for many years, although the expense of it is very heavy.

* A class of vessels built about that time in humble imitation of the beautiful Bermudian "Mudian," or vulgo "Mugin," as the sailors call them; they were the very worst class of advice-boats, either for weather or for sailing, I ever beheld. Why was not one of the most approved, purchased, brought home, and built after? Simply because the Navy Board was composed chiefly of landmen.

I am glad the fire vessels are coming, for should it be at all practicable, Hood will strike a blow with them. He and Keats should have broad pendants, with captains, if you do not promote them to the flag, as I trust you will, on the 1st August. We have just finished filling up the squadron here, with five months' provisions, and as much water as the ships can stow : the people are in high health, and both they, the captains and officers improving in all things : but it will be long before the baneful example on board the ——— during the whole time that Admiral ———'s flag was on board the ship, is effaced.

Yours ever,

ST. VINCENT.

To Viscount Howick.

Hibernia, near Ushant, 25th July 1806.

My dear Lord,

I send your lordship, enclosed, a very interesting letter from Sir Thomas Trowbridge, and in conversation with Captain Walker this morning, I learned that Sir ——— has been playing the whole game. I shall never ask you to promote, but if several lieutenants of the Hibernia are not raised to commanders, the example set in her cannot be of long continuance.

The officers are always upon the full stretch, and it would have the appearance of puffing, if I were to detail the change which has taken place here, and throughout the fleet under my command, since I was last placed at the head of it.

Ever yours most truly,

ST. VINCENT.

The following letter alludes to the contemplated emigration of the court of Portugal.

To Viscount Howick.

Hibernia, near Ushant, 27th July,
2 o'clock, A.M., 1806.

My dear Lord,

Perhaps it will be more advisable that my colleague should proceed directly to the city* appointed in a frigate, or in one of Sir John Duckworth's squadron, and that I should make the best of my way thither from hence ; for, with the knowledge I possess of persons and things in that kingdom, I may be able to ascertain points before his arrival, without discovery of the object of my mission. I shall have occasion for the Nimrod and Betsey cutters, and I propose taking them with me ; it will therefore be necessary to send two small hired cutters to this rendezvous, to enable Sir Charles Cotton to carry on a constant correspondence with Mr. Marsden, which must be very satisfactory to your lordship, and necessary for the information of the Board.

Four months' provision of all species should be sent to Rear-admiral Harvey's squadron ; he waters his ships at the Bargoune Islands, but the victuallers may as well carry a ground-tier of water. Mr. Tucker will readily make out their demands, from the abstract of their state and condition. I will endeavour to do it this day.

I have despatched Lieutenant Bloye, the friend of Mr. Coke, to take the command of the Glory, and bring her to this rendezvous ; and as the Latona parted company with us some hours ago, with a fine breeze of wind at south, which will enable her to lay her course, she will join Captain Keats in twenty-four hours, and, I hope, convey Captain Warren, and the two lieutenants of the Glory, to the Sampson in the same space of time. I hear the said ship Sampson is losing her men at a great rate by desertion. The captains and lieutenants in Cawsand Bay and Spithead are for the most part ashore day and night, and the men left to the

* Lisbon.

care of children, by whom the fleet is inundated ;—boys of eleven and twelve years of age being rated Mids, and in some instances Masters' Mates. Wishing this letter to get to England as fast as possible, I do not detain the Courier cutter for a survey to be taken of her, which will be much better performed by the officers of Plymouth yard.

Ever, my dear lord,

Yours most truly,

ST. VINCENT.

To Viscount Howick.

28th July 1806.

My dear Lord,

Should the mission in contemplation take effect, your lordship will have the goodness to direct a silken union, the same as that of the guards, both in texture and size, to be sent to the Hibernia immediately, as it will be of more importance than can be imagined, by those unacquainted with the outward and visible sign of foreign countries, that I always appear with the insignia of a field-marshal.

As Buonaparte seems determined to make one family of the Continent, we ought to take all the islands which are of real utility under our wing. Among these the Canary Isles and Madeira, appear to me of the utmost importance.

Yours truly,

ST. VINCENT.

To Viscount Howick.

Hibernia, off Ushant, 1st August 1806.

My dear Lord,

You have barely time to fit the Portuguese ships of war and Brazilmen to go out of the Tagus, before the French troops reach Lisbon. Their movements are so rapid, having neither baggage-waggons nor camp followers to impede them, that they will get through Biscay and Gallicia in a very

short time after the first rains. Oporto will be seized upon by a detachment, and they will be facilitated down the Tagus by large barco-longos. The Spanish army will probably secure all the passes, which the Portuguese cannot resist; three thousand men of a *corps d'élite*, under such an officer as Sir Brent Spencer or William Stuart, would secure St. Julien's and the Bonzée, I think; but Lord Rosslyn, General Oakes, or Colonel Stuart, who served under Sir Charles Stuart, who was sent to Portugal to examine into the state of the army and magazines, can give you a very correct statement of the force necessary for those important objects.

Your lordship is quite right in your judgment of sending Sir John Duckworth to cruize to the westward of the Rock of Lisbon; but you should not keep me here one hour, if you expect any thing decisive to be done with the court of Portugal.

Yours ever,

ST. VINCENT.

To Rear-Admiral Markham.

Hibernia, near Ushant, 1st August 1806.

My dear Admiral,

Scarce a day passes without my hearing of the ruin of one or more valuable young men, sub-lieutenants of gun-brigs. Mr. Simpson of the Haughty, who was day-mate of the San Joseph, and made a sub-lieutenant, is a recent instance of it; such a wretched squalid creature I never beheld; and Captain Ricketts tells me that a finer or better young man never existed, while he served in the San Joseph. You should give four boys of the second class to each gun-brig, in addition to her complement; they would very soon become good seamen.

Yours ever,

ST. VINCENT.

To Viscount Howick.

Hibernia, near Ushant, 2d August, 1806.

My dear Lord,

Is it not very probable the ten ships of the line in the outer road of Brest (which I am confident are held in readiness to proceed to sea at a moment's notice, notwithstanding the intelligence you have received to the contrary,) may, by eluding the vigilance of my successor, push for the Tagus? To provide for such an event, an instruction to Sir Charles Cotton, or Sir Charles Pole, to make the best of his way to the bar of Lisbon, should he not be able to ascertain the route of the enemy, seems advisable.

Every vessel we speak with from Bilboa, confirms the account of a French army being assembled at Bayonne, and that it is destined for Portugal; so that I entertain no doubt of the fact. There are fewer vessels than ever was known at Bayonne, St. Jean de Luz, Bilboa, St. Andero, St. Sebastian, or any of the ports on the north coasts of Spain; which proves that this army is not intended for embarkation.

I fear this westerly wind and rainy weather retard the progress of Lord Lauderdale, and keep Sir J. Duckworth in port: the good old maxim, of going to sea to look for a wind, being ill attended to. It is a practice I never will depart from during the summer months. We have not split a sail, or met with the most trifling accident, although we have been close in with Ushant, every day.

Yours most truly,

ST. VINCENT.

To Viscount Howick.

Off Ushant, August 8th, 1806.

My dear Lord,

The vigilance of the enemy has alone prevented Tom Johnstone from doing what he professed. I wish your

lordship could inspire the officers of his Majesty's fleet with the same zeal to protect them in port ; where, I am bold to say, there is not an officer on deck, either at Spithead or the Downs, Cawsand Bay, the Nore, or Yarmouth Roads, during the night ; and any of them might be carried by an open boat, or the whole destroyed by fire-vessels.

Ever yours, most truly,

ST. VINCENT.

Tom Johnstone was a smuggler, a daring, intrepid fellow, and, I believe, outwitted a great many people besides the officers of the revenue. I suspect he had a great hand in recommending the attack on the sluices of Slykens, by General Coote and Sir Home Popham.—See *Naval History*.

CHAPTER XV.

Lord St. Vincent arrives in the Tagus with six sail of the Line—State of Portugal at that time—Object of the mission—Precautions taken by the Admiral to facilitate the embarkation of the Court, should they decide not to go—Two letters to Viscount Howick—To B. Tucker—To Viscount Howick—Several on the subject of the mission, and the conduct of the court of Portugal—To Rear-Admiral Markham—To Henry Brougham, Esq. (now Lord Brougham)—To Viscount Howick—To ditto—To the Right Hon. Thomas Grenville, now become first lord of the Admiralty—To the same—To Lord Howick—To Rear-Admiral Markham.

FROM the acute observations of his lordship the reader may now trace the causes of that revolution, which at this moment is desolating the unhappy Peninsula.

The history of the mission to the court of Portugal, in 1806, deserves the strictest attention. The predictions of Earl St. Vincent on this subject were realized. The weakness and vacillation of the house of Braganza justified all his most unfavourable anticipations. Unimproved by experience, unawed by events of daily occurrence, the princes of that corrupt family persevered in their deeds of misrule, cruelty and injustice, until the measure of their crimes was full; and the same causes which have invariably produced the same effects, have thrown not only the

kingdom of Portugal, but the whole peninsula, into a state of revolution, anarchy, and civil war. The emigration offered by Earl St. Vincent and Lord Strangford, in 1806, was rejected at the time, but embraced within two years after ; and from that period to the present moment the affairs, both of Spain and Portugal, have been gradually sinking into what appears to be almost hopeless and interminable misery ; to that state of misery which history, both sacred and profane, assures us has invariably been the lot of those nations, whose rulers and people have forsaken the paths of religion and of justice.

To Viscount Howick.

Hibernia, at anchor below Belem Castle,
14th August 1806.

My dear Lord,

It is not my intention to bring more ships of the line into the Tagus than is stipulated by treaty ; the surplus will cruise in the vicinity, to be ready for the finale. The boats of such of the squadron as have joined are in good order, the Hibernia's numerous and powerful. I have taken measures to obtain uniformity in the clothing of the marines, by appointing Captain Lewis, an old and zealous officer, inspector-general. The captains, subalterns, and intelligent serjeants, embarked on board the other ships of the squadron, attend the parade of the Hibernia occasionally, and take pattern of our additional appointments, which are well adapted to this climate. We are waiting for the pratique-boat, but lest a packet should be upon the point of sailing, I enclose this to Lord Strangford.

Yours most truly,

ST. VINCENT.

To Viscount Howick.

Hibernia, in the Tagus, 15th August 1806.

My dear Lord,

Having at the instant of the Nimrod cutter appearing off Port St. Julien, received important intelligence by the Thetis, of which the enclosed is a copy, I have ordered the Lavinia to cruise off Cape Roxent, in order to apprise me by signal, off the bar, of the approach of the enemy, should they be bound into the Tagus. And as there is a good deal of demur about giving me pratique, and a considerable degree of sensation excited by my sudden appearance here, the Prince Regent and Mr. Draijo being absent at Maffra, I shall avail myself of this unintentional disrespect to remain in the Bay d'Orias, where I shall have a better view of the Bar, and be more à portée to put to sea, than above Belem Castle.

Most truly yours,
ST. VINCENT.

To B. Tucker, Esq.

Hibernia, in the Tagus, 16th August 1806.

Dear Tucker,

I find young Maniche to be altogether unworthy of the portrait. One trait of him will suffice;—he married a natural daughter of the Marquis de Florisal, the other day, and did not invite one of his father's or mother's relations to the *fête des nocés*, and appears prouder of this left-handed connexion, than of the memory of his illustrious parents. I have, therefore, determined to present the portrait to Don Rodrigo de Souza, and I desire you will direct a very handsome frame to be made for it, and send it well and most carefully packed in a good case, by the first ship of war.*

* His lordship also presented the same person with a steel-hilted sword, the price of which he begged might be unlimited.

The prince regent and all his ministers, are amusing themselves by a tour round the northern circle of the Portuguese dominions ; which I am not sorry for. Every one who is not downright French, cries shame at the squadron being kept so long in quarantine ; and I shall gain the vantage ground by it. There never was such a scene of apathy anèantisme as Portugal presents. I could not have conceived it possible that a country, low enough, God knows, seven years ago, should be so sunk. No one, native or foreigner, save the French, who are in the secret, seem aware of the impending danger. Lord Strangford stole on board yesterday, and, though a very young man, appears up to his situation, and I am rather glad that Lord R. Fitzgerald and Mr. Gambier are away.

The dirt must have been about the hearts of the French squadron at Martinique, where they certainly might have been destroyed, had Sir John Warren arrived in time. They must be in a dreadful condition, and will have the devil's luck if they escape all the squadrons which Lord Howick, with unparalleled exertion, has so judiciously placed to intercept them.

Yours ever,
ST. VINCENT.

To Viscount Howick.

Hibernia, in the Tagus, 19th August 1806.

My dear Lord,

An express arrived yester-morn from the Marquis of Lorona, who commands on the frontier, with accounts that the Spanish troops were assembling at Badajoz ; yet no measure of defence is taking here, nor the smallest movement or sensation, excepting what has arisen from my sudden appearance. Lord Strangford has sent letter after letter to Mons. d'Aranjo, to ask an audience, and demand pratique for the squadron ; to which he has received no answer. I have every reason to believe the poor

prince regent is deluded, and that this old rogue is diverting his mind from the impending danger, by carrying him about; and I shall not be surprised to find that he is in league with France and Spain, his perfidy being up to anything. Should this turn out to be the case, it appears to me the wisest policy that we should take possession of the Brazils; for we shall be bereft of all its produce, and vent for our own manufactures, when France gets hold of Portugal. With this view of things, I keep the squadron complete in water and provisions, and intend to return the spirits with which all the ships are overdone (except the *Hibernia*) to Mr. Sataro, the agent-victualler, and take wine in lieu of it, he accounting to the Victualling office for the difference. The French West-India squadron, if not soon heard of on this side of the Atlantic, is gone to Boston. I think they are in too sickly a state to attempt Halifax or Newfoundland.

The enclosed, which I beg leave to recommend to your lordship's most favourable consideration, is from the daughter of a gallant old officer, and the widow of Captain Kendall, who was of a good family (Cornish I think), into which Admiral Coates married.

Most truly yours,

ST. VINCENT.

To Viscount Howick.

Hibernia, in the Tagus, 24th August 1806.

My dear Lord,

For the melancholy picture of the court, I must refer you to Lord Strangford's despatches; the description is too bad for the pen of a seaman. Mons. d'Aranjo returned to Lisbon on the 18th, and the following morning we were admitted to pratique, and having notice over-night, the squadron was unmoored and run up abreast of the palace as soon as the officer of health had done his business; and I landed while the ships were running up. After paying my respects to Santa Martha, the residence of his

Majesty's minister, I waited upon Mons.d'Aranjo, who received me with cordiality, as far as the outward and visible sign went. He made an awkward apology for keeping us so long in quarantine, which I did not suffer to pass without a remark upon it, and expressed my surprise that my appearance should have created suspicion in the minds of the Portuguese government (which had been artfully worked upon by the French party, and had sunk the paper four per cent.). I observed, that the selection of an officer who had always been the fast friend and protector of Portugal, ought to have reconciled the government and people to the sudden appearance of a British squadron. He interrupted me at this sentence, and observed that the prince had said, upon his communicating our arrival, "Lord St.Vincent is my friend." Upon the whole the conversation, as far it went, was satisfactory, and would have been continued, but that the Spanish ambassador was announced; when I took my leave, and faced the Spaniard in my way through the room of audience, who did not seem to like me at all. On Wednesday I called on the Vicomte d'Anadia, minister of the marine, who has been very friendly, in the prompt supply of a main-topmast for the *Illustrious*, and a main-topsail yard for the *Kent*.

A complete change in the sentiments of the people, touching the objects of my mission, is manifested, by the kindness shown to myself and every officer in the squadron, by all ranks and orders, particularly by the clergy, from the pope's nuncio downwards; and I have every reason to believe that the most unbounded confidence is placed in the rectitude of my intentions. The army is very much diminished in numbers since I was last in Portugal. Thirteen thousand ill-armed infantry, is the utmost that can be counted upon, and the cavalry beggars all description, both as to officers and men;—no magazines, and all the wood-work of the interior of the barracks in and about Lisbon, has been torn away, and consumed in cooking the soldiers' dinners. One 74-gun ship, and a few frigates, are cruising in the Strait's mouth, and they are now making every effort to equip a 64,

and a frigate, to go out after an Algerine of twenty guns ; but I doubt whether they will be able to effect it.

Most truly yours,

ST. VINCENT.

To Viscount Howick.

Hibernia, in the Tagus, 31st August 1806.

My dear Lord,

Mons. d'Aranjo improves very much upon acquaintance, and is certainly a very able minister ; and I now incline to a very different opinion of him from that which I entertained on my first arrival, which was formed on the judgment of his rivals ; and I believe him to be neither an Englishman nor a Frenchman in his politics, but a Portuguese of the best description, dreadfully counteracted and embarrassed in all his measures by the Count de Villa Verde, who was very near choking yesterday, and if he continues in his gluttony, it is to be hoped he will not last long. I refer your lordship to Lord Rosslyn's paper, for the relation of our reception yesterday, which was every thing we could wish, and the partiality of the Prince Regent in my favour was marked in the strongest manner. Although the sensation created by my appearance in the Tagus, at the head of a squadron, is by no means over, and the Portuguese yet worship me as the Indians do the devil, it is fit that I should apprise your lordship, that the troops, once landed, must remain locked up, and considerable additions be made to their numbers, whether considered as an effective force for the protection of Portugal, the means of carrying away the ships of war and large Brazilmen, or as a measure to induce a peace.

Yours most truly,

ST. VINCENT.

To Viscount Howick.

1st September 1806.

My dear Lord,

Monsieur d'Aranjo having represented to me, yesterday, that his despatches could not be ready before to-morrow, I have directed the Santa Marguerita to wait for them: this gives me an opportunity to explain why an addition is necessary to be made to the number of troops supposed to be on their way hither. From all I have observed, the government of Portugal will be either openly or tacitly adverse to landing the troops, much more so to giving them possession of the three most important forts. This being granted, it will be absolutely necessary to take possession of the heights above Lisbon, which command the aqueduct, magazine of flour, and mills; to do which effectually, will require several thousand men in addition to those in garrison, and a regiment of cavalry is indispensable. I wish Lord Holland was at Madrid, where I am clear he would render the most essential service to his country; and if Mr. Fox is as well as the papers report, and I most heartily wish him to be, we may look to his appearance here *en route* soon.

Yours most truly,

ST. VINCENT.

To Viscount Howick.

Hibernia, in the Tagus, 7th Sept. 1806.

My dear Lord,

Nothing has occurred since the sailing of the Santa Marguerita, except the agitation which has been created by the despatches of the Chevalier de Souza. The Prince Regent, and the persons placed about him by Villa Verde, are shook to the centre. Don Rodrigo de Souza is in town, and I am to see him to-morrow. I go down to Passa d'Arcos this morning, to pay a visit to Juan d'Almeida,

and in my way back I mean to call upon Madame d'Aranjo, who played a great game with the queen and dowager of Brazils, and is now very busy ; and I will give your lordship an account of what I can pick up by this conveyance, as the packet does not sail until to-morrow.

I submit to your lordship's consideration, whether some notice should not be taken of the attention the squadron has received from the Viscomte d'Anadria, minister of marine, in the next despatch from Mr. Fox's office. A little incense in the king's name goes a great way here ; and both Lord Rosslyn and myself are in as good odour, at present, as the immense timidity of " the powers that be " (with the exception of d'Aranjo, who is firm) will admit.

Ever yours,

ST. VINCENT.

To Viscount Howick.

Hibernia, in the Tagus, 8th Sept. 1806.

My dear Lord,

I saw Don Juan d'Almeida yesterday, and found him extremely averse to taking any share in the government of this poor deserted country. I also sounded him about forming a ministry conjointly with d'Aranjo ; which he reprobated, and asserted that public opinion would not accompany the formation of such an administration ; adding, that Lord Grenville knew enough of d'Aranjo not to trust him. I then requested him to name a man fit to resort to in such a crisis, when he gave me the names of two, who might be relied on—the Conde Orlando de Servidos, and le Viscomte de Barbacena. He said that Don Rodrigo de Souza was much more sanguine than he was, for, in his own view of things, *the future beggared* all description. I afterwards saw Madame d'Almeida, who is very much improved in person and manners, and really a very beautiful and interesting woman.

From thence I went to the Ogras, and was most graciously received by Madame d'Ariago, who showed me her quinta, which is of her own forming, and a delightful scene. Unfortunately, there were several people with her, so that I could do nothing more than cultivate. She pressed me to repeat my visit (which I shall certainly do), and she consented to her niece, who is a very pleasing woman, coming to dinner and a dance on board the *Hibernia*, with the family of the Austrian minister, who is an old acquaintance of mine, on Friday next.

The last-named family live in the Marquis de Pombal's house during the summer months, and a great intimacy subsists between the two families. As we went out of the garden of Madame d'Ariago, Monsieur Reyneval entered, and after being introduced to him, I invited him to be of the party, which he accepted with great politeness. In my way back to Lisbon, I called on General Simcoe, and found him somewhat better; but Mr. Smith, the surgeon of the *Hibernia*, who constantly attends the general, told us, as I was getting into my carriage, that the irregularity of his pulse continued; and I observed that his legs were much swelled, and I cannot but be apprehensive that his disorder will be ultimately fatal. I omitted to state to your lordship, that Don Juan d'Almeida held the same language of precipitation which d'Aranjo and Villa Verde did at Massa. From Lord Strangford the cabinet will be informed of other intrigues, for his lordship has the *entrée* into several houses, where intrigue of every description is going on at a great rate.

Permit *mé* to name Captain Jackson,* of the *Musquito* sloop, to your lordship, as a man of uncommon merit and

* Samuel Jackson, a very distinguished officer. He had been first lieutenant with Keats, which is saying every thing for him. He commanded one of those desperate fire-vessels off Boulogne (see *Naval History*, vol. iii, 1st edition, p. 257), and was not made a captain till one year after this recommendation of Lord St. Vincent. He now commands the *Bellerophon* of eighty-four guns.

intelligence, who has been unaccountably neglected by Lord Keith, and hardly used by Lords Melville and Barham.

Ever yours,

ST. VINCENT.

To Viscount Howick.

Hibernia, in the Tagus, 8th Sept. 1806.

My dear Lord,

I have passed an hour with Don Rodrigo de Souza, who entertained the same opinion of d'Aranjo with Don Juan d'Almeida; and assured me that on the 14th of August, the day of my arrival in the Tagus, a gentleman of his acquaintance, and one connected with Villa Verde, showed him a letter from Lorenzo de Lima, in which was expressed the greatest alarm about Portugal, and recommending a close connexion with England as the only means of preserving the country from the most imminent danger. This, I must confess, staggered me as to d'Aranjo, who protested to Lord Rosslyn and me, that de Lima had not apprized them of any intention, on the part of France, to disturb the tranquillity of Portugal. I am to see Don Rodrigo and Madame de Souza on board the Hibernia, and I will write to your lordship by the Whiting, just arrived from Madeira.

Yours ever,

ST. VINCENT.

The hints given in the following letter, respecting the size and construction of ships of the line, were not entirely thrown away, though I own I have never yet seen so fine a ship as the Tonnant built in any of our dock-yards, nor a frigate surpassing the Egyptienne in good qualities.

To Rear-Admiral Markham.

Sept. 15, 1806.

My dear Admiral,

If the *Ville de Paris* requires the repairs you describe, would it not be better to give Thornborough the Royal Sovereign, until you have seasoned timber sufficient to regenerate the *Ville de Paris*. I rejoice that means have been found to subdue the obstinacy of Sir ———, and that the riders are completely done away; all the ships either built or repaired with them being completely ruined; and I do verily believe that Sir ——— and Sir ——— had less science than any two men you can name in any country in Europe, France, Portugal, Spain, America, Sweden, Russia, Denmark, and Holland not excepted; and they were not capable of giving the draft of a ship ordered to be built after any thing captured from the enemy, yet had the presumptuous vanity to think they could improve her "*body*" or "*lines*," the only words they possessed which had any relation to naval architecture. Your plan of building three-decked ships and seventy-fours to carry their guns six feet out of the water, and to stand up to their canvas, is admirable; and I hope you will never build a seventy-four larger than the *Impétueux* or *Donegal*, nor a first-rate beyond the *Ville de Paris* and *St. Joseph*. It is very fortunate that ——— is the junior surveyor, and not ———; for although the latter is a very good man, he is too much wedded to old dock-yard manners, devoted to Sir J. Henslow and Sir William Rule, and not a little jealous of Joe Tucker.

I wish you would make more use of Falmouth Harbour, which ought to be the resort of all ships not requiring to be docked or paid. Good artificers of all descriptions may be hired at all times cheaper than the pay in the royal yards; the stuff is very good, and masts may be shifted most expeditiously; add to this, that there is no inducement for officers to sleep out of their ships, and the advantage to the public will be manifold.

Yours ever,

ST. VINCENT.

To Henry Brougham, Esq. (now Lord Brougham).

Hibernia, in the Tagus, 20th Sept. 1806.

Sir,

I am very sensible of your obliging attention in giving me such an interesting and entertaining account of your tour. I have long wished to see the northern frontier of Portugal, and to visit several estimable persons at Oporto, for whom I have great respect, and Mr. Warre stands foremost on the list.

The rumour here is, that Talleyrand has assured the court of Portugal that our ministers were egregiously duped, and that my mission is the most absurd and ridiculous that ever was imagined; and that the emperor is a mirror of every thing that is loyal and just, and will ever be a good and faithful ally to Portugal. I make no doubt of this stuff going down with the many at Mafra.

The Hibernia continues to be in fashion, and is daily visited by crowds of people of all ranks and descriptions. Both d'Aranjo and d'Anadria have dined on board, and are apparently in good-humour with Lord Rosslyn and

Your sincere, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

To Viscount Howick.

Hibernia, in the Tagus, 21st Sept. 1806.

My dear Lord,

No step is taking by this government to restore the finance, or the army: indeed the latter cannot be improved until the former is put upon a good footing; and from every information I can obtain, no alteration in the ministry can be effected without treating the Prince Regent in the manner that Lannes used to do; and even that would not do without ten or twelve thousand troops upon the banks of the Tagus. There is a rumour, that those which were intended to come here are about to embark for their original desti-

nation. If you have in contemplation to prepare another body, pray let it come from Cork. The German corps, backed by two brigades of British and one thousand mounted cavalry, would do ; and if they can be got ready to sail the first easterly wind in November, they will come here at a proper season. When Sir John Warren and Sir Richard Strachan arrive, don't let the ships strip ; for they cannot need refreshment ; but let them supply the place of sixty-fours off the Texel and in my squadron, and employ the sixty-fours in conveying troops hither.

Having been attacked by a diarrhœa, I was not able to go to Monsieur d'Aranjo's concert and supper on Thursday ; but I learn that he paid much attention to *Monsieur d'Hermans*, who is a cut-throat rogue, and was a traitor. Lords Rosslyn and Strangford are indefatigable. General Simcoe continues at Cintra, and is reported to be something better, but I fear his constitution is breaking up.

Yours ever,

ST. VINCENT.

To Viscount Howick.

Hibernia, 27th Sept. 1806.

My dear Lord,

Although I was prepared for the death of Mr. Fox, the certainty of that mournful event having taken place has quite upset me. I feel it the more poignantly because of your probable removal from the Admiralty ; a measure I foresaw, and in consequence I desired Mr. Tucker to prepare you for my retreat from the command of the fleet ; a station nothing upon earth, but Mr. Fox and yourself, could have induced me to reassume. I will, however, do nothing rashly, and I will take no step until after my arrival in Cawsand Bay ; and I entreat you to leave orders, to be immediately dispatched to the squadron off Ushant, for me to proceed thither the moment I join Sir Charles Cotton.

I most heartily wish it was in my power to bring about

a coalition between Don Rodrigo de Souza and Monsieur d'Aranjo ; but in the present state of the court of Lisbon, the thing is impossible. The Count de Villa Verde is in possession of every avenue to the palace, the prince is in a complete state of imbecility, and d'Aranjo and d'Anadria obliged to temporize. The latter has no desire to continue in office, having a taste for the polite arts, and preferring domestic life ; while d'Aranjo has no existence but in office, and will act the Vicar of Bray to keep his place.

I have great doubts whether General Simcoe will live to reach England. He is so valuable a man, that I could not do less than appoint a ship of the line for his conveyance. When I communicated to Captain Rutherford that Sir Thomas Louis was placed under my orders, he proceeded immediately to join Vice-admiral Lord Collingwood, and the Betsy cutter will proceed immediately to apprise his lordship that I shall quit the Tagus to-morrow, and use the utmost dispatch in detaching the squadron under the orders of Rear-admiral Sir Thomas Louis.

Ever yours,
ST. VINCENT.

To the Right Hon. Thomas Grenville.

Hibernia, near Ushant, 14th Oct. 1806.

Sir,

On falling in with the Santa Marguerita last evening, I was honoured with your letter of the 3d inst. I return you many thanks for the obliging expressions in regard to me contained therein, and I beg leave to assure you that I have long held your public and private character in the highest estimation ; and that, next to the anxious desire of serving my country, which has ever governed my conduct, the support of the present administration was the motive that induced me, at an advanced period of my life, to venture again on this fickle element : which

Lord Howick will bear testimony to ; and that a condition was annexed that I should not be required to keep the sea between the autumnal and vernal equinox. I have, in consequence, hired a house at Rame, very near Cawsand, for the express purpose of conducting the business of the fleet, without interfering with Admiral Young in the duties of the port of Plymouth ; and I am somewhat surprised not to find authority to proceed to Cawsand Bay in the *Hibernia*, on my junction with Sir Charles Cotton ; for I have suffered so much during several winters successively, that I cannot possibly stand the fag of this station ; and whether I shall be able to endure the humid air of the west is very doubtful. In any event, you may rely on my giving every possible support to the Government, and assistance to you in the very arduous post wherein his Majesty has been pleased to place you, and I will never intentionally mislead you in opinions of men and things.

Permit me to recommend to your protection the captains and lieutenants who have been selected to serve with me for their merits ; and Mr. Fairfax,* the master, by far the ablest seaman and navigator I have ever met with in that character, and a perfect gentleman, who I hope will fill the first vacancy of a master-attendant in a dock-yard at home. The fatigues of a very blowing night, with the business necessarily devolving on me this day, have brought on a most overpowering head-ache, which, added to the writing I have been obliged to go through, will, I trust, be accepted as an apology for employing my nephew as an amanuensis.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your most obedient, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

* He was master-attendant at Halifax, Nova Scotia, in 1812.

To the Right Hon. Thomas Grenville.

Hibernia, near Ushant, Sept. 1806.

Sir,

I feel as I ought the attention you have shown to me, in directing a lieutenant's commission to be made out for Mr. Jackson. Of Lieutenant Usher I knew nothing until I was appointed to the command of the Channel fleet, seven years ago, when I soon discovered a spirit of enterprize, accompanied with sound judgment and deliberate courage, which carried him through very difficult exploits; and he has pursued that line of conduct ever since, and is considered, by all the officers he has served under, as a very able partisan, and admirably fitted for the service you have selected him for.

I agree with you entirely in opinion, that the infernal* invention of Mr. Fulton might be used by the French with much greater advantage against us, than it could against them; for at this moment, three o'clock in the morning, I very much doubt whether there is an officer upon deck in any one of his Majesty's ships at Spithead, Cawsand Bay, in the Downs, Yarmouth Roads, or at the Nore; while a vigilance is observed on board the French ships at Rochefort, l'Orient, and probably at Brest, although we have not had the means of ascertaining it there, which surpasses anything I ever heard of.

I have the honour, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

* It is impossible to read the remarks of his lordship on that infamous invention, without joining heartily in the execration of the cowardly contrivance, so unworthy of a manly and warlike people. Fulton should have been sent to sea in one of his own stone ships; we should then never have heard any more of him. I am quite sure his lordship was right in his conjecture about the look-out kept on board of our ships in port; and unless the captains were compelled to sleep on board their ships, there was no remedy. This remedy Lord St. Vincent applied, and that is one reason why his health was refused to be drank at Bath.

To Viscount Howick.

Hibernia, near Ushant, 18th Oct. 1806.

My dear Lord,

Lord Rosslyn will have given you the detail of all our proceedings in Portugal, and as I agree with him *in toto*, it is unnecessary to plague you with any thing more touching that devoted country. We had the good fortune to be well with all the Portuguese people, from the first nobility down to the piscadore, and no squadron ever departed from the Tagus in more perfect harmony with the country.

The new arrangements, as far as I can judge, are calculated to keep you together upon the principles with which you came into office, and no efforts shall be wanting on my part to uphold you. Should Markham and Tucker be removed from the Admiralty, and persons brought there of whom I have a mean opinion—and I am sorry to say, there are few flags at the main or the fore I have any respect for—I do not see how it is possible for me to hold on in the command of this fleet; for the most trifling slip of my pen might be the subject of quaint comment, and compel me to retire in ill-humour.

But, as I observed to your lordship in my last letter from the Tagus, I will do nothing rashly. I have every reason to be satisfied with the conduct of Mr. Grenville, which has been most obliging.

You will see, by the enclosed, that I had relaxed in the port orders before your lordship's letter of the 9th reached me; so that you are indebted to me for the maintenance of the detached squadrons during the last six months, the restoration of the discipline of the fleet, freedom from disease and desertion; and I pride myself more upon it, than upon any exertion of my life. If you will, my good lord, bring a bill into Parliament to disqualify any officer under the rank of rear-admiral to sit in the House of Commons, the navy may be preserved; but while a little, drunken,

worthless jackanapes is permitted to hold the seditious language he has done, in the presence of flag officers of rank, you will require a man of greater health and vigour than I possess to command your fleets.

Ever, my dear Lord, yours, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

To Rear-Admiral Markham.

Hibernia, near Ushant, 21st Oct. 1806.

My dear Admiral,

The enclosed letter from Keats confirms me in the opinion I had formed, that Prince Jerome is indebted to the recall of that squadron for his escape. It is by far the best position that could be fixed upon ; for a squadron of six sail of the line, with a proper accompaniment of frigates, sloops, &c., will always spread the parallel of the Glenans and Belleisle, which is the line of march of all French ships of war from the other side the Atlantic ; and I can hardly think it possible that any sea officers of experience can differ in opinion from me on this subject : *a cabinet composed of landsmen may.*

Let me know whether you hold on, or cut and run ; for my decision will very much depend thereon.

Yours ever,

ST. VINCENT.

I have already observed that the arrangements planned by Lord St. Vincent in the Tagus, in 1806, were carried into effect by Sir Sydney Smith, in 1808. We now follow the gallant and veteran earl into port for the winter.

CHAPTER XVI.

To the Right Hon. Thomas Grenville—To the same—To the same—
 To the same—To Viscount Howick—To the same—To Mr. Coch-
 rane Johnson—To Admiral Young—To Admiral Montague—To
 Admiral the Hon. William Cornwallis—Admiral Young—Right
 Hon. Thomas Grenville—To the same—To the same—To Rear-
 Admiral Markham—To the Right Hon. Thomas Grenville—To the
 same—To Commodore Keats—To the Right Hon. Thomas Gren-
 ville—Remarks on Pilotage—Defective system in the British Navy
 —No encouragement given to young officers to travel and visit
 foreign ports, to obtain local knowledge—To William Marsden, Esq.
 —To the Right Hon. Thomas Grenville.

To the Right Hon. Thos. Grenville.

Hibernia, Cawsand Bay, 22d Oct. 1806.

Sir,

I am very much obliged by your prompt compli-
 ance with my request: one gale of wind would have done
 me up for the winter, probably rendered me *hors de combat*.

I cannot give credit to the City intelligence, of three ships
 of the line having got out of Brest; because the two last
 reconnoitres which were made by Captain Wolfe, a man
 who may be depended on, ascertains two first-rates and
 eight seventy-fours, including the *Regulus*. I never be-
 lieved that the ten sail which appeared fit for sea in the
 outer road all the summer, were all of them capable of any
 thing more than a run to Ireland, or to Lisbon.

The *Jemappe* made demonstration with the other ships
 at Isle d'Aix, although she was totally unfit for service;

and I am strongly of opinion, that two, or perhaps four, of the ships in the road of Brest were of that description. There certainly is no difficulty in the blockade, with an easterly wind, if it does not overblow; but this can only be done by tacking in the night, so as to be close in with Ushant at daylight; which I have always practised, and it is natural to suppose that in my absence the practice was not discontinued.

I rejoice in the speedy recovery of Sir Sam. Hood; you have in him, Sir Thos. Trowbridge, and Captain Keats, great seamen, abounding in resources, who disdain putting a farthing in their pockets which does not justly belong to them. When one looks at the barren list of admirals, a promotion to the flag, including Captain Stopford (who is also a valuable man) suggests itself. Should this take place, Sir Samuel Hood and Captain Keats should have broad pendants and captains, or they will be worn out.

The sedentary application at the Admiralty is very injurious to bilious habits, and Admiral Markham has suffered by it more than once. You will find in him firmness and integrity to the back-bone, happily combined with ability, zeal, and diligence; and I heartily hope his health will not compel him to retire from the Board, while you may wish his continuance there.

I have the honour, &c.,

ST. VINCENT.

To the Right Hon. Thos. Grenville.

Cawsand Bay, 25th Oct. 1806.

Sir,

The position in contemplation for the squadron which escorts the expedition under the command of Colonel Crawford to the Cape de Verde Islands, is very judicious; but I have great doubts of the wisdom of breaking up what is called the Rochefort squadron, which should cruise further to the westward than it has done during the summer months;

for Admiral Almand appears to me the ablest sea-officer in the French service, and will do an incredible mischief if he gets into the ocean ; and Captain Keats has such a perfect knowledge of the coast, from Biscay to Brest inclusive, that a fitter man for the service cannot be found. The disastrous state of the French squadron on the coast of North America leaves you nothing to apprehend from that quarter. Nevertheless, I am of opinion that two ships of the line, sixty-four's, will do ; and the Africa may be well spared, and should go out with the large convoy, now about to assemble at Spithead, to return with the homeward-bound trade from the Leeward Islands ; one to accompany each of the next convoys from that quarter.

I have the honour, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

To the Right Hon. Thos Grenville.

Cawsand Bay, 26th Oct. 1806.

Sir,

There is great wisdom in your plan of making Bermuda the depository of naval stores, in preference to Halifax ; for the latter place is exposed to an insult from a small French force, and in case of a rupture with America, would fall immediately. Besides, the coast is not approachable during the winter months, while the other is accessible in all seasons, and is of the utmost importance ; for, should it fall into the hands of any other power, our homeward-bound trade from the islands would incessantly be in great peril.

I took Mr. Churchill from Gibraltar, intending to have made him a master shipwright at home, had I staid at the Admiralty ; and unless his salary is made equal to a master shipwright here, his present situation is preferable to a master shipwright abroad, at the salary now paid. He certainly is better qualified to fulfil your intentions at Bermuda than any man I know, with the exception of Mr. Tucker,

master shipwright of Plymouth ; and, placed on a good footing, I am sure would be very happy to go thither at a moment's warning.

I have the honour, &c.

ST. VINCENT

There can be no doubt of the propriety of preserving Bermuda as a naval depôt at all times ; but Halifax should not be neglected. It is one of the finest harbours in North America ; indeed, I know not of any so good, or so easy of access ; and I have always been mortified to think that the naval department should have been entirely removed to Bermuda. Both places should have been adapted for the refitting of our ships of war ; neither Bermuda nor Halifax should be neglected as they have been. When I convoyed out a sixty-four-gun ship, armed *en flute*, in 1811, with naval and military stores on board to the value of £100,000, there was scarcely a gun on the island, to defend her from a privateer ; and she was incapable of defending herself.

To the Right Hon. Thomas Grenville.

Cawsand Bay, 26th Oct. 1806.

Sir,

Enclosed is a copy of the instructions I gave to Sir Charles Cotton, to guide the mode of his cruising, in my absence from the station before Brest ; and if you will refer to his journal, which I sent up by Mr. Tucker, you will be a judge how far he has complied with them, from the beginning of September last to my return from the Tagus.

I observe in Rear-Admiral d'Auvergné's intelligence, that

two of the frigates which committed depredation upon our Greenland fishery have got into St. Maloes, and must have stolen into the Channel along the coast of Ireland; I therefore wish to call your attention to the naked state that coast has been in. Several frigates, appointed, as I conceived, to that important service, were cruising about the Bayonne Islands when Rear-Admiral Harvey first appeared off Cape Finisterre, and we spoke with the Boadicea, cruising in the stream of the Loire, on our passage from Lisbon; and Captain John Maitland informed me, that the Amethyst and Boadicea had been in the Parage for six weeks, and were to stay out some time longer. The season is now fast approaching for the privateers from St. Maloes pushing out to intercept our homeward-bound ships on the outer edge of soundings, and off Cape Clear; and if frigates employed for the protection of trade in those parts, are not kept within proper limits, you must expect to hear of great injury being done to our commerce, particularly to that of Liverpool, Bristol, and the ports of Ireland; short days and long nights being very favourable to the enterprize of the Maloeins. Whatever occurs to me upon points in which your peace of mind is materially concerned, I will communicate from time to time.

I have the honour, &c. &c.

ST. VINCENT.

To Viscount Howick.

Hibernia, in Cawsand Bay, 27th Oct. 1806.

My dear Lord,

I learn, with great pleasure, that Mr. Hiley Addington and Mr. Adams are not to be disturbed at Harwich, and that Mr. Bathurst is to have an office before his re-election; all which, I hope, is true; and that the perfect recovery of Mr. Addington is no longer doubtful.

You have much more reason to reproach yourself, for confirming the Consular Office at L—— on Mr. G——,

(who is doing every thing mean and dishonourable to the British character) than I was aware of, when I talked to you upon that subject; and every day's experience confirms me in the opinion I have long formed, that these saints are all hypocrisy, and many of them d—— rogues.

Is it made known to you that Mr. Williams, late secretary to the commissioners of Naval Inquiry, is without any reward, has a wife and several children, and not a shilling to buy them bread?

Your lordship will recollect, that he was removed from an employment in the Navy Office, of sufficient emolument to clothe and feed his family at least, when he was appointed secretary to the commission, and I refer you to his principals for the ability and fidelity with which he filled that important station. His case, and that of Osborne Markham, are crying sins against your lordship and Viscount Sidmouth.

Your very sincere,

ST. VINCENT.

To Admiral William Young.

Glory, in Cawsand Bay, 21st Nov. 1806.

Sir,

I am confident that nothing but misapprehension could lead a person of your good sense and high correctness to take offence, or to suppose an unauthorised interference, when certainly none was intended. On the contrary, it is with me a great object to uphold the dignity of your important command; and no one is more forward to allow the very capable and judicious manner in which the duties of it are conducted, than,

Sir, yours, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

*To Admiral Montagu, Commander-in-chief at
Portsmouth.*

Rame, 11th March 1807.

My dear Admiral,

I have not judged it right to call upon the captains of the ships under my orders to account for an appearance of relaxation in their duty, while sitting in a port where your flag is flying, without making the same known to you by sending the letters open for your perusal. I cannot admit that there is any point at issue between us; and I really am at a loss to know what you mean by such an observation. I am, with great regard,

Yours, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

The two foregoing letters, and the two which follow, refer to a punctilio of service—for it could be no more: it was, whether the commander-in-chief of the Channel fleet, who had occasion to send his cruizers into Portsmouth or Plymouth harbours to refit, was to consider them under his orders or not, during the time of their stay in port. I conclude the affirmation was decided by the Admiralty. These questions should be set at rest as soon as they occur. I have reason to believe, that both Sir William Young and Sir George Montagu felt sore on the subject, to the very last hour of their lives; and Lord St. Vincent himself, on one occasion, shows impatience at the conduct of Sir William Young.

To the Hon. Admiral Cornwallis.

Rame House, 15th Nov 1807.

My dear Admiral,

I have many apologies to make for neglecting to study the case between Admiral Montagu, you, and others, as re-stated; which was occasioned by my being suddenly ordered to the Tagus soon after I received it, upon a very critical embassy, which engrossed all my time, and the subject was entirely forgotten until I received your letter of the 14th ultimo.

There is a position laid down on the part of Admiral Montagu, which, I must confess, astonishes me: it assumes that when any ship or vessel is fitting in a port, although placed by the Board of Admiralty under the orders of a flag-officer actually at sea, in Torbay, or any other roadstead, the admiral of the port such ship happens to be in, has the command of her to all intents and purposes. This must be cleared up, before I can give my opinion; for I have hitherto considered the ship under my orders, or under the orders of any other flag-officer in actual service, as no otherwise subject to the authority of a port-admiral, than in what merely relates to their speedy equipment: for, in point of fact, the port-admiral is only the organ, through which either the Admiralty, or the admiral under whose command the ships in question are, convey their orders and instructions. I have exercised this power and authority in the most unlimited manner while off Ushant, both in the year 1801 and the present year, and no doubt or question has arisen out of it.

I am, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

To Admiral William Young, Commander-in-chief, Plymouth-Dock.

Glory, in Cawsand Bay, 23d Nov. 1806.

Sir,

Although I do not think that the words of my letter could be fairly construed to signify that I had received directions to equip ships which I was pressingly enjoined to recall, that they may be prepared for foreign service; yet, to obviate the misapprehension which appears in your acknowledgment, and to prevent any delay to his Majesty's service respecting the ships alluded to, I wish you clearly to understand, that further than providing for their immediate return to port, I never meant to give, nor insinuate that I had received directions, nor do I feel myself in anywise authorized to interfere with their equipment. Knowing, however, the wishes of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that they should be brought forward as speedily as possible, I felt it my duty to recommend postponing the progress of the *Hibernia*, conceiving myself the best judge of the necessity of her immediate services. With regard to her continuance in Hamoaze, I submit to your consideration, whether the lords commissioners of the Admiralty, when they authorized me to send her into harbour, did not purpose that the mode of her equipment should be regulated by

Sir, your humble servant,

ST. VINCENT.

To the Right Hon. Thomas Grenville, First Lord of the Admiralty.

Rame House, 5th Nov. 1806.

Sir,

I am truly sensible of the early attention you pay to the almost unexampled exertions of the officers of the *Hibernia*, in directing a number of commissions for lieutenants to be made out, with authority to me for the insertion

of the names of meritorious midshipmen, which I will strictly attend to. The exact discipline, regularity, and good order in the *Hibernia*, has had a very extraordinary effect in stimulating the officers of other ships to endeavour to come up to her. I must do the squadron which served with me in the *Tagus* the justice to say, that nothing could be more exemplary in conforming to all our maxims; and I will not be unmindful of the young people recommended to me from that quarter, in the distribution of the commissions.

I have the honour, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

To the Right Hon. Thomas Grenville.

Rame House, 16th Nov. 1806.

Sir,

I never will withhold an opinion of men or things, when you see reason to consult me upon either; I therefore frankly tell you, that I do not think the public has suffered in the smallest degree by Sir ——— having declined to serve second in command in the Channel fleet.

At the same time, I certainly have no objection to him as a man; but that he lacks the firmness and steady perseverance of an officer, fit to encounter the various difficulties incident to this service, I have good reason to know, from the lamentable state of discipline and arrangement in which I found the ——— seven years ago, when he had been * * * * under Lord ———. But where to find a substitute, I know not. Few men have had the opportunities of studying naval characters I have experienced from fifty-nine years service, and mixing very much with them in society, until I was honoured with a chief command; and I do not know one flag-officer upon half-pay, senior to Sir C. Cotton, whom, if I filled the station you do, I could confide in to guard the port of Brest. There is such a deficiency of nerve under responsibility, that I see officers of

the greatest promise and acquired character sink beneath its weight. Lord Gardner and Vice-admiral Thornborough, brave as lions in the presence of an enemy, are instances in point; and the present order of cruising before Brest requires that the fleet should be tacked or wore once at least in the night during an easterly wind; which few flag-officers can endure.

I have the honour, &c. &c.

ST. VINCENT.

To the Right Hon. Thomas Grenville.

Rame House, 17th Nov. 1806.

Sir,

Admiral Rodney Bligh has always been esteemed a good and brave seaman; but I did not name him in my letter of yesterday, because he had a dreadful shake from illness last year, and I am not sure that he is perfectly restored. If he is, with Captain Conn for his captain, I should have no apprehension: for, next to Mr. Fairfax, the master of the Royal Sovereign is, I believe, the ablest in the service; and particularly well acquainted with the bay and environs of Brest. I mention Captain Conn,* knowing him to be a hardy, expert, practical seaman; which all who know him will vouch for.

I have the honour to be, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

To the Right Hon. Thomas Grenville.

Rame House, 21st Nov. 1806.

Sir,

No officer on the flag-list of the navy is better qualified to command the squadron before Brest than Sir James Saumarez.

* This gallant and lamented officer, in a fit of temporary derangement, threw himself overboard from the Swiftsure, the ship he commanded in North America, and was drowned.

I have written to Commissioner Fanshawe to send Mr. Churchill to the Admiralty immediately, without assigning the cause. I feel quite confident that a fitter man for Bermuda cannot be found any where; for he is capable of careening a ship without the assistance of a master-attendant; which no shipwright officer, who has not held the situation he has, and is not possessed of the same degree of manliness could undertake.

Mr. Whidby is the man of all others I should select to conduct the new works in Plymouth Sound, under the superintendence of Mr. Rennie, who will come down to his assistance whenever he is at fault: no two men understand each other better. Such part of the reinforcement intended for the Mediterranean as depends upon me, shall meet with no delay.

I have the honour, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

To Rear-Admiral Markham.

Rame House, 26th Nov. 1806.

My dear Admiral,

I had a good deal of conversation with Mr. Joseph Tucker yesterday, upon the state of the navy. I very much wish that you would hear him patiently upon this subject, when he arrives in town; and the best way will be, either to ask him to dine with you, or meet him at Ben Tucker's; for I am sure you cannot spare time or give attention to his interesting relation in a morning, on account of the load of business you have to go through. He is decidedly of opinion that the *Namur* should not be sent to cruize in the Western Ocean at this season of the year; but that she may be safely employed about the Downs, Boulogne, or the Flemish Banks: I shall therefore continue my flag on board her in Cawsand Bay, until I have the final determination of the Board.

I enclose a comparative statement of the wear and tear of masts, yards, and spars, between the *Hibernia* and *l'Egyptienne*, and have to remark, that the sprit-sail yard expended as a fore-top-sail yard, and one of the jib-booms, of the *Hibernia* were carried away by a Danish merchant ship coming athwart-hawse of us while we were moored in the Tagus; and the hand-mast was spared to one of our seventy-four's (I think the *Colossus*) to make a cross-jack yard. * * * * has been equally expensive during the time Captain —— commanded her; and she has performed very little service. Nearly half the time she has been in commission has been passed in port. You shall have a comparative expenditure of sails and cordage soon.

C—— M—— is done up, and become good for nothing, and, in my opinion, ought to be put to rest. I think my master * * * * will be very glad to get rid of his * * * *, for he hates the thing, and took a ship *à la manière d'aquit*, as many others have done.

I am very anxious for a little moderate weather, to get the *Fame* and *Foudroyant* out; for the Bay will be too much crowded when the *Formidable* and *Monarch* arrive. The *Ramilies* ought also to proceed to Cork, with a westerly wind and moderate weather. It does not appear to me that Admiral Young is aware of the hazard too great a number of ships in Cawsand Bay put the whole to. He has been too long a theorist to retain much practical knowledge, if he ever possessed it, which I very much doubt; but he is by far the best port admiral I ever saw.

Yours ever,
ST. VINCENT.

To the Right Hon. Thomas Grenville.

Rame House, 28th Nov. 1806.

Sir,

Sir Charles Cotton has a very numerous family, and if he is not afraid of climate, I should think the *Jamaica*

station an object to him ; and as we are upon the very best footing, and he esteems himself under very essential obligations to me, I intend to sound his inclinations by this post.

Should a detachment of French ships escape from Brest, I am of opinion they will push for the Havannah, pick up the French ship of the line there, with all the money and bullion they can squeeze from the governor, and then proceed to the Chesapeake. Your plan, therefore, of adding to the force you have in that quarter, appears to me very advisable, and preferable to placing the two ships under Sir Alexander Cochrane.

The occupation of Alexandria, with the possession of Malta, will, I hope, suffice to keep the French in check. Milo would not require many troops, but I fear you cannot spare numbers sufficient to possess Rhodes or Candia.

Mr. Bunce is an able shipwright, and good fellow, and if not too far advanced in age, I should think him the fittest man you can find for your purpose—Churchill having declined, which I am sorry for.

I have the honour, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

To the Right Hon. Thomas Grenville.

Rame House, 30th Nov. 1806.

Sir,

It is evident that Bonaparte has in his mind's eye the recovery of the whole island of St. Domingo from the blacks, and that he will feed the garrison from time to time with European troops ; and from the number of Germans and Poles found in the frigates captured by Sir Samuel Hood, [I judge] that they were bound thither ; for it has been his constant maxim to employ foreigners in the French colonies. I therefore think the commanders of our squadrons in the West-Indies should be instructed to keep a watchful eye on the north side of Porto Rico and the Mona Passage. Sir Alexander Cochrane, no doubt, keeps a cruizer off Deseada,

which is the land they always make if they do not touch at Martinique. There have been instances of their going to Cayenne for refreshments and intelligence, after a long and circuitous passage.

Sir Charles Cotton replies, he has no desire to go to Jamaica: this is the result of dread of climate. An intimate friend of his told me yesterday, Newfoundland was his great object.

I have the honour, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

To the Right Hon. Thomas Grenville.

Rame House, 3d Dec. 1806.

Sir,

You could not possibly have made a better selection for hardy enterprize than that of Sir Richard Strachan; but he has neither temper nor headpiece for negotiation. In Captain Morris* you will experience every quality which can adorn a sea-officer, and he is peculiarly fitted for the Chesapeake. The station before Rochefort, although very important on account of the squadron of the enemy at l'Isle d'Aix, under the command of an able officer, who has already done us so much mischief, is very hazardous; and under the orders of any other man than Captain Keats, who possesses so much knowledge of that sea, I should judge improper to be continued during the winter months. I have placed a chain of frigates in such positions as I hope will get sight of any of the enemy's ships which may escape from either Brest or Rochefort.

The mission of the second surveyor, with two master shipwrights, to inspect the two-decked ships in ordinary, is very judicious, and I have no doubt of their finding a sufficient number of them to form a squadron for the Baltic.

* The late Vice-Admiral Sir John Nichol Morris, one of Nelson's men at Trafalgar, where he commanded the Colossus. I need say no more of him than what is stated by Lord St Vincent, which I know to have been strictly true.

In the character of the protector of friendless merit, I
thank you for the promotion of Captain Langford, and
I have the honour, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

The following letter to the late Sir Richard Keats does honour alike to the writer and to the object of it. Lord St. Vincent was here truly prophetic as to the services which Keats would render to the Allies if sent to the Baltic. How admirably he brought off Romana's army! Wherever you saw Keats, whether as the captain of a frigate, or of a ship of the line, or commanding a squadron, he was sure to distinguish himself.

To Commodore Keats.

Rame House, 9th March 1807.

My dear Sir,

I congratulate you most heartily on the excellent state of your squadron, after the severe trial you have experienced, which I attribute entirely to your skilful and judicious management of it. The loss of the *Atalanta* is to be lamented, although one of those accidents a people who combat the elements and watch the ports of the enemy, as we do, are liable to.

Having learned from the Duke of Clarence that the being created a baronet would be acceptable to you, I lost no time in communicating it to Mr. Grenville, who received the communication graciously, and I will give his memory a jog before you come into port, which is likely to happen very soon; for Sir Richard Strachan, although ready to go wherever he may be ordered, having expressed some diffidence touching his fitness to co-operate with foreign powers, from his deficiency in languages, &c., it has been signified to

me that you are intended to command, *ad interim*, the naval force destined for the Baltic. I cannot express the regret I feel at parting with you ; yet I am not so selfish as to attempt to deprive the country of your eminent services on so conspicuous an occasion ; for sure I am that the allied armies will acquire a support by them, which in the final event may put a stop to the career of the second Alexander. Wherever you go, you will be accompanied by the warmest wishes and regards of,

My dear Sir, yours, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

To the Right Hon. Thomas Grenville.

Rame House, 18th March 1807.

Sir,

I return you many thanks for your obliging letter of the 15th. I really am not in a state of health to undertake any service at sea, and under any other Admiralty, I should propose to retire ; but will hold on as long as you think I can be useful.

I enclose a very interesting letter from Commodore Keats, with whom I perfectly and entirely agree, that the blind confidence placed in the skill and knowledge of pilots, has occasioned the loss of many of his Majesty's ships. The *Atalanta* and *Pomone* have been thrown away shamefully. I wish very much that the Board may find it convenient to dock and new copper the *Montagu*. She is so superiorly commanded and manned, that with good sailing, every thing may be expected from her. Commodore Keats is equally anxious with myself upon this subject, and the object may be attained in the time she will take to be caulked and refitted.

I have the honour, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

The preceding letter shows the continued zeal and watchfulness of Lord St. Vincent, while at the same time it discovers the unwelcome truth of his declining health. It also contains a wise caution against giving implicit confidence to French or other pilots; and it will be found that his lordship is completely borne out by the facts. Captains and masters of his Majesty's ships, and, indeed, every officer on board, are deeply interested in the qualification of these men. In moderate weather, boats and officers can never be better employed than in sounding and making observations, either on an enemy's coast or our own. The North Sea pilots, during the late war, were shamefully and alarmingly ignorant of their business; but they were supported by the Dover and Cinque Port interest: Queenborough and Harwich also gave us their portion of these gentry. It is to be hoped, a Reformed Parliament will, in future, consign them to that harmless insignificance from which they never would have emerged, had they been without borough influence. I can speak from experience on this point; for I was once run on shore, and nearly lost in a sixty-four gun ship; once cast away in the North Seas, and lost all I possessed; once ran on shore on the ridge and varne, between Dover and Calais, when I commanded a sloop of war, and when I had cautioned the pilot against the danger; and once run on shore in a frigate I commanded under a battery on the

coast of France, when in chase of an enemy, and while I was talking to the pilot, and endeavouring to ascertain his knowledge of the place. The fault is with our own Government, which never yet gave encouragement to young officers to become pilots. We should have a corps of that class in the navy, rising in rank like the engineers. They should be good surveyors, and eligible to the highest offices in the service. I am aware that the difficulty of acquiring local knowledge on the coast of an enemy is much greater *in peace* than *in war*; but much might and could be done, by our young naval students going to reside for a certain period at the sea-ports of the Continent. They might, by reading and observation, as well as by practical experience in coasting vessels, acquire all the knowledge of hidden dangers—depths of water, set of the tides, and other circumstances, which would make them valuable beyond all other classes of officers; and their promotion should be the certain reward of their merit. A master in the navy, however great his skill and assiduity, was still kept as a master, “because he could not be spared.” Why not promote him, and still give him charge as a pilot? Bowen alone, that I knew of, was allowed to escape from that corps, and to obtain the rank which should never have been denied to men who devoted themselves to that most useful and important branch of the service.

Out of thirty-two ships of the line lost by

Great Britain during the late war, no less than fifteen were wrecked, owing to the want of local knowledge in the officers, or the ignorance of the pilots. I have no hesitation in giving their names, from memory.

- * St. George ... 98 } off the Scaw, crew of both perished,
- * Defence ... 74 } except eighteen men.
- * Hero ... 74, on the Haeks, all perished.
- * Minotaur ... 74, on ditto, ditto.
- Impregnable ... 98, Chichester Flats, crew saved.
- * Courageaux ... 74, coast of Barbary, part saved.
- Bombay Castle 74, South Catchup, Lisbon, crew saved.
- Marlborough ... 74, Birvideaux, off Belleisle, ditto.
- Agamemnon ... 64, Rio de la Plata, ditto.
- * Athenienne ... 64, Esquerques, part saved.
- * Invincible ... 74, Lemon and Oar, ditto.
- Hannibal ... 74, Algeziras Bay.
- America ... 64, Formiga, near Jamaica.
- Repulse ... 64, on the Penmarks.
- Nassau ... 64, on the Haeks, besides Romney of 50,
on the same shoal; six other fifty-gun ships, besides
frigates, sloops of war, and small vessels innumerable.

Thus, besides the ships and stores, upwards of four thousand British seamen were lost to their country. If we had had a corps of well-trained pilots belonging to the King's service, most of these accidents would have been avoided; and why should a nation like our's depend on the skill or the promises of a man who, to serve us faithfully, must needs betray his country. The French and Dutch pilots were traitors and renegadoes to a man: they were as bad as Paul Jones.

And yet we trusted these men with the safety of our ships of war, although, if they ran them on shore, they might make a merit of the act in their own country.

Our own pilots could never be relied on. They had a *trick* of making money and cheating the Government. Two were generally put on board a ship of war at a time, and both supposed to possess equal knowledge; but this was far from being the fact. One of them was scarcely a sailor, much less a pilot; and though left in charge of the ship, he never took any step without calling his "partner."

This would seem to be the most appropriate place to mention the high and well-merited compliment paid to Lord St. Vincent by the seamen of the *Hibernia*, in which ship his lordship's flag had flown for two years. To have offered him plate, a sword, or any other testimony of their regard in that shape, they knew would have been useless, and no doubt rejected; but they devised one in their own minds, which they justly deemed would be agreeable to him. The flag which flew at their maintop-gallant-mast head, and which they were so proud to serve under, was made of common bunting, and they resolved at once to present him with one, made of the richest silk of British manufacture which could be procured. They therefore subscribed for this purpose, and their commission was executed in a manner which

did justice to their noble intention, and was at the same time highly creditable to the person who undertook the charge of it. The Union is, of itself, the most beautiful flag in the world, both for combination of colours, and the disposition of the parts; and executed on this grand scale, it had a truly magnificent appearance. I never saw it displayed in its proper place, but have often seen it spread out on the lawn at Rochetts, where it always afforded me delight to behold this valuable tribute of esteem from these gallant fellows. There was a vast association of ideas which crowded in and affected the mind in no ordinary manner. Lord St. Vincent was supposed, or said, and falsely said, to be tyrannical. He was called to command our fleets, and to preside at the Admiralty, during the most eventful periods of our history. He was displaced from the head of our service in 1804, and was called back to command the Channel fleet by the same persons who turned him out of the Admiralty. He was compelled, in the discharge of his duty, to order the execution of many an unhappy seaman for violation of discipline. He had been at the head of the Admiralty in 1802, when the unfortunate mutineers of the *Temeraire* suffered the extreme sentence of the law. Yet still, under all this load of heavy responsibility, the seamen, of their own free-will, presented him with the noblest mark of esteem

and gratitude that ever was conferred by any body of men on their chief—a token of their admiration for his talents, and gratitude for the services, whether at sea or in the cabinet, rendered to them and to their brethren in arms.

Shortly after this unequivocal display of a thorough return to good and sound discipline on the part of the sailors in the Channel fleet, Lord St. Vincent felt himself compelled to resign the command, and we never again find him at sea as a Commander-in-chief.

To the Right Hon. Thomas Grenville.

Rame, 15th March 1807.

Sir,

I will write to Admiral de Courcy as you suggest, for it is extremely desirable that Captain Peacocke* should continue in the command of the *Foudroyant*. When Sir Richard Strachan proceeds to relieve Commodore Keats, it will be advisable to reduce the number of the squadron off Cape Finisterre: to do it before might hurt the feelings of the rear-admiral, and I conclude that Sir Richard will be in motion soon. While an active squadron of the enemy is held in readiness to push out from Isle d'Aix, it is my opinion that an adequate force to keep it in check is far preferable to keeping a squadron on the coast of Spain, when there is no demonstration in Ferrol or Vigo; at least during the summer months. Under almost any other officer than Commodore Keats,† I should tremble for the fate of a squadron of our ships exposed to the difficulties of the navigation of that gulf;—the more so, as I discover a

* Now Rear-Admiral Richard Peacocke.

† The late highly respected governor of Greenwich Hospital.

very great repugnance to anchor in le Rade de Basque (for good reasons, I have no doubt), during the ensuing winter; if the Russians do not dispose of the French emperor and his army before that period arrives.

I have the honour, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

To the Right Hon. Thomas Grenville.

Rame, 25th March 1807.

Sir,

If any thing could add to the unremitted marks of attention and regard I have received from you during your able and honest administration of the affairs of the Admiralty, your obliging letter of the 22d would achieve it. I have most religiously complied with your injunctions, in filling the blanks of these commissions you have been so good to send me. That of commander is given to Mr. Ramage, in preference to three lieutenants, who served with me as midshipmen in the *Ville de Paris*, and were promoted from her while I commanded in the Mediterranean, because of his superior merits and ability; although *they* are deserving, but not in an equal degree. The support I have received from the Board under your auspices, has enabled me to restore the Channel fleet to the vigour in which I left it seven years ago. I shall be most happy to hear of it continuing in the same state after I take my departure.

I have the honour, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

To William Marsden, Esq.

Renown, in Cawsand Bay, 26th March 1807.

Sir,

I request you will represent to the lords commissioners of the Admiralty, that finding my health so much impaired by long services and advanced age, I am no longer

able to perform the duties of the important command I am honoured with, in the manner I have been accustomed to do. I feel it an imperious duty to desire I may be relieved from it, so soon as their lordships can make an arrangement to that effect.

I am, Sir, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

To William Marsden, Esq.

March 1807.

Sir,

I desire you will convey to the lords commissioners of the Admiralty the lively sense I feel of the approbation their lordships have been pleased to express of the zeal with which I have endeavoured to serve my king and country, in carrying into execution the important duties of the station assigned me; and how much I lament that the frequent return of the complaint I have been for some time past affected with leaves me no hope of being able to perform the various services comprehended in the command of the Channel fleet, with advantage to his Majesty's arms, and satisfaction to my own mind. I, therefore, am under the painful necessity of repeating the request I had the honour to make through you to their lordships in my letter of the 26th instant.

I am, Sir, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

To the Right Hon. Thomas Grenville.

Mortimer-street, 1st April 1807.

Sir,

No language can express my feelings upon the receipt of your more than kind letter, of the 28th of March. My heart is so full, I can only give it vent by assuring you

that, to the last hour of my life, I shall endeavour to give proofs of the high respect, esteem and regard with which
I have the honour to be, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

Here we take our leave of Lord St. Vincent, as an admiral and commander-in-chief of the fleet afloat. We must now view him as a farmer, and a country gentleman ; and in all these capacities we shall look in vain for a brighter example of patriotism, virtue, and hospitality.

As I have spoken of his last appearance in the House of Lords, which was in 1810, I shall have no occasion to recur to that part of his history.

CHAPTER XV.

Political principles of the Earl of St. Vincent—He was esteemed by three succeeding monarchs of Great Britain—He is suspected of being a Roman Catholic—The charge refuted—He is favourable to Catholic Emancipation—His kindness to the poor—Disapproved of general education—Death of Lady St. Vincent—Her monument and epitaph—The boat's crew composed of Admirals—Remarks on his early rising—His economy of time and money—His resentment at any attempt to over-reach—Anecdote of the rug-maker—Punctuality in answering letters, and manner of passing his time—His anger at naval officers being in debt—His disapproval of matrimony—His violence against the Editor of the Day and New Times—Reasons for it—His observations on the dinner at Bath, where his health was refused to be drank—The friends that used to visit Rochetts—Chantry makes a bust of him—The monument in St. Paul's was not done by that artist, and bearing no resemblance to the original—Melancholy death of Calcott, the butler.

The political principles of the Earl of St. Vincent have been shown to be those of a staunch and consistent Whig, firmly attached to the Shelburne and Lansdowne interest. Mr. Fox was his great friend, and Mr. Pitt he equally disliked;* yet he was so fortunate as to possess the esteem of his Majesty King George the Third,

* Lord St. Vincent's reasons for personally disliking Mr. Pitt I have given in another place. His motion in the House of Commons on the state of the navy in 1804 will explain the whole, and coupled with this was the subsequent conduct of Mr. Jeffrey (of Poole), whose persevering malignity, or error, vexed, but never injured, the noble earl.

and also that of King George the Fourth, and he certainly had the confidence of his late Majesty when Duke of Clarence.

Speaking on political subjects his lordship once said to me, "I suppose you have heard me called a Roman Catholic?" I replied that I never had. "Well then," he said, "I know that many people think I am, but I am not; though I wish well to the cause of emancipation, because I believe it will strengthen the empire; for the Catholics will all support the monarchy." The more immediate occasion of these observations, was a recent visit of a Roman Catholic bishop to Rochetts, who modestly asked for £500, to be employed, as he said, in making converts. The request was refused, but it gave rise to some suspicions regarding his lordship. These were fortified by another circumstance: latterly he never attended church; the reason of this, however, was his great susceptibility of cold in his head, and being subject to violent paroxysms of cough; added to which there existed an unfortunate difference between him and the incumbent of the living at South Weald.

His lordship was beloved and respected by all classes in his own neighbourhood, and throughout the county. He knew the history of every family, particularly of those who were in any pecuniary distress; and to these, if they were deserving, his purse was ever open; but he drew a strong line between industry and idleness. He

caused two beautiful cottages to be built on his estate, which he let at a very low rent, to two poor people of good character, who had brought up large families without ever applying for parochial relief. A brass plate on their doors stated this fact.

It was amusing to hear the dialogues between him and the village dames. "Well Mrs. — how do you and your husband get on now?" "Oh! very well, my lord."—"I am glad to hear it, for it was once very different; you quarrelled and fought, and he used to beat you." "Yes, my lord, so he did, but I plucked up a spirit, and led him a life, *and now we gets on very well.*"

Lord St. Vincent was a liberal contributor to all public charities; but disapproved of the Vaccine Institution, because, he said, the small pox was intended by nature as a check to a redundant population. This was what might be called a Malthusian heresy, of which I am not quite certain I did not, at one time, partake; but I have since entirely recanted, and am happy to think the generality of reflecting people coincide with me. Lord St. Vincent disapproved also of educating the children of the poor, and was no friend to the sailors learning to read and write; a prejudice I think he must have derived from his friend Admiral Barrington; but I trust it is now exploded. All our best men in the army and navy can read and write; and our best non-commissioned officers in both services come from

Scotland, where education among the poor is constantly attended to.

The death of Lady St. Vincent took place in 1816. The event had long been expected and prepared for, as her ladyship had outlived every enjoyment of life. Lord St. Vincent caused a beautiful monument to be erected to her memory, by Chantrey, and I believe it is generally thought one of the *chef-d'œuvres* of that eminent artist. The modest epitaph was written by the earl himself, and although I give it from memory, I think the words were nearly, if not exactly, as follow :

“ Sacred to the memory of Martha, Countess of St. Vincent, who was eminently pious, virtuous, and charitable.”

The figure is a female kneeling to receive the holy sacrament

His lordship took great delight in his beautiful seat at Rochetts, which he had ornamented in the most tasteful manner. When he was created an earl, he added the east wing, with the great dining-room and drawing-room, and the bedrooms over them. He had formed a fine piece of water at the bottom of the north field, and had a pretty little four-oared boat on it. Four admirals met on this little lake ;—the Earl of Northesk, Griffiths Colpoys, Matthew Scott and Lord Garies. They proposed to take a row, and an admiral's secretary who happened to be present, was appointed coxswain to this illustrious “ crew of jolly-boat boys.” The gallant officers, it must be

owned, did not give entire satisfaction to their coxswain in their manner of handling their oars, and he offered them the never failing stimulant on such occasions if they would exert themselves : “ Give way and keep stroke, my lads, and I will give you a glass of grog each when you get on shore.” The application of such encouragement, by a secretary, to four venerable flag-officers, produced a great deal of mirth, and I believe put a stop to further progress in the excursion. Such a boat’s crew, whose rank so far exceeded their prowess at the oar, has probably not been seen in England, since the days of Canute the Great.

I have said that Lord St. Vincent was economical as well as generous ; but he never could endure the idea of being imposed upon. He was at the same time scrupulously just, cautious in giving offence, and delighted to encourage ingenuity and industry, while he instantly repulsed any attempt at overreaching or encroachment. A poor man was recommended to him as a carpet-manufacturer, who had been unfortunate, and Lord St. Vincent employed him to make hearth-rugs of silk and of worsted. When they were brought home, his lordship presented one of them to each of his female guests ; but, by some error, he conceived that the man had made an overcharge ; he, therefore, ordered the bill to be paid, and told him he would not employ him any more. The poor fellow quitted the room very much disconcerted, when one of the ladies observed, that the

rug for which he was supposed to have made the overcharge, was of silk, and no more than the original price agreed on. Lord St.Vincent rang the bell with great energy, "Call Webb back again." Webb came, expecting a further rebuke. "Mr.Webb," said the noble earl, "I have sent for you to beg your pardon. I have accused you unjustly; you are an honest man; I was not aware that the rug was of silk."

When clubs were first established, I was invited to join the one now called the United Service. I consulted Lord St.Vincent, who said, "No, sir, take my advice and have nothing to do with them; they are one of the signs of the times of which I highly disapprove; these assemblies of army and navy may in time become dangerous to the government." In consequence of this advice I never did join them; though I cannot perceive the same objection which his lordship expressed. Yet I am fully persuaded that clubs have an injurious effect on society, by holding out such comforts, and even luxuries, as a premium to celibacy, that few young men who enter them are likely to marry; still more rarely to become house-keepers; and hence the knowledge, the integrity, and the intelligence of this numerous class, are generally lost to their country as jurymen.

I never knew any one who was, at once, so great an economist, both of money and time, as Lord St.Vincent, and yet so liberal with both. It was

this seasonable parsimony, which enabled him to spare so much for the good of his fellow-creatures. His life was extended to a great length, and yet, according to the average mode of taking rest, he may be considered to have lived nearly twice as long as most other men of the same age. Of the time he gave to sleep, I have overstated the amount when I say that he rose at four o'clock. In summer-time he was very commonly on his grounds at half-past two, always before his labourers; and the man who was the first to join always received half-a-crown for his industry and early-rising. At five o'clock in the morning, both in summer and winter, the coachman was regularly despatched on horseback to Brentwood (two miles off), for the letters and newspapers. The former were generally opened and read to him by my sister. Some he would answer with his own hand; others he would request her to answer for him in his name.

When he had "made up his post" as he called it, and franked all his letters, he would ask what privilege there was remaining, in order that he might know how far he could accommodate his friends.

It was an invariable rule with his lordship, to answer a letter as soon as he received it; and the impression he made on my mind was, that great uneasiness and heartburning were occasioned by delay and anxious expectation, while at the same

time, a letter answered was a relief to the mind. The delay of doing so was a continual drag, ending at last either in total neglect, or at the best a very bad, perhaps even a false reason for the non-performance of an essential duty. As soon as the letters were finished, the morning and evening papers were taken in hand; the reading of which, except during the session of Parliament, usually occupied the remainder of the time till breakfast was announced at nine o'clock. "And now," he would exclaim, "I have got through all my work, and the day is my own:" meaning by that, that he could employ himself if the weather was fine, in looking about his grounds, and attending to his improvements and alterations, or drive about the country and visit his friends. Among these, he was particularly partial to the family of Mr. Tower, the lord of the manor of Weald; to Lord and Lady Petre, at Thornden Hall; and to Sir Thomas and Lady Neave, at Dagnum.

He was not pleased if his male guests delayed their appearance after six o'clock in the morning: to the ladies he was more indulgent. As soon as the company had decided on their plans for passing the day, they were desired to name the time for the carriages to be at the door; and if the party were not in the hall and ready to jump in, he would scold them in such good-natured, but at the same time such forcible language, that

it never failed to make a lasting impression, and a repetition of the offence never occurred again with the same persons. Sometimes a lady would venture to remonstrate on being so hurried. "Oh! my lord, you make no allowance for us ladies—you should consider."—"Consider what, madam? You named your own time, and I cannot allow my horses to take cold, because you do not know how long it will take you to prepare for your drive."

He used often to say, that it was the ruin of servants, to make them wait beyond the time fixed; they were taken off from other work and kept idle, and spent their leisure in improper conversation, or they became careless and inattentive to the punctual observance of their orders; in excuse for which they might fairly say, "What's the use of going to a moment—you'll only be kept waiting in the cold for an hour." He always experienced the good effects of adhering to this regulation. No man was ever better served, or more beloved by his attendants; and it is said, that no good servant ever left his house.

The earl was careful never to allow a tradesman's bill to remain unpaid after it was sent in, unless, as was sometimes the case, there was an attempt to overreach, when it was referred to his solicitor.

I have heard him say, that there were, he believed, very few really independent men in England:—"they all want something, or fancy they want, either for themselves or their children, or

dependents. Every person, sir," said he, "lives beyond his income; and three servants are kept when there should be only two. If a man has but a shilling a-day, he should live upon tenpence, and lay by twopence."

He was always an advocate for ready-money dealings: convinced, no doubt, that those who gave long credit made their good customers pay for their bad ones.

He was indignant and angry when he heard of a naval officer being in debt. "They should live upon a ration, sir: I have done it myself, and would do it again, sooner than borrow money."

He discouraged matrimony, until an officer had attained a sufficient rank to enable him to form a proper connexion; and I do not think he liked to have married officers in his fleet, for he said they were the first to run into port, and the last to come out of it. Still there were exceptions to this rule, even in his own mind.

The French, I believe, do not allow their naval officers to marry under a certain rank, on pain of being dismissed the service; unless they can obtain the sanction of the minister of the marine.

When Sir George Naylor was revising the Peerage, he came down to Rochetts, to request that the earl would give him some anecdotes of his life to insert in his publication; to which his

lordship replied, "Certainly *not*. I am utterly averse to such nonsense and vanity." But, after a few minutes' silence, he said, "Yes, there is one anecdote I will give you, and of which I am more proud than of any other event of my life. When I commanded the Alarm frigate, on the coast of Barbary, one of her boats being near the shore, in the Bay of Tunis, two slaves swam off, and concealed themselves in the King's colours. The Dey of Tunis sent to demand their return; I refused, saying, that the instant they took refuge under the British flag, they were *free*. He threatened to fire upon the ship; I instantly got the Alarm abreast of the castle, and sent him word, that the first shot that was fired should be returned, and the castle levelled with the ground: I took no further steps, and I carried my two *freed* slaves off in triumph. You may insert this in your work, Sir George, if you please, and that is all the anecdote I shall give you."

On one occasion, when Sir George Cockburn was at Rochetts, the conversation turned on his lordship's first entrance into the navy, and the earl repeated the story of his father's coachman. "We should have the name of that coachman," said Sir George. "I cannot now recollect it," said his lordship; then taking two or three turns from one end of the dining-room to the other, he suddenly stopped and said, "Richard Penker-man, sir, was his name." I instantly wrote it

down in my memorandum-book, and think the poor man richly deserves this humble tribute of respect to his memory.

Strong in his political attachments, Lord St. Vincent adhered to them with his characteristic firmness ; but I never heard him indulge in any invective or abuse against any one of his opponents, except once : it was on the occasion of my taking down two newspapers to him on Monday morning—that being a blank day, as he called it, when his friends usually contrived to go and see him, and never failed to bring with them the morning and Sunday papers. “ Well, captain,” said his lordship, “ what news do you bring us ? ”

“ I have brought you the John Bull and the New Times, my lord.”

“ For the John Bull, sir, I thank you ; for although he gives us poor Whigs no quarter, yet the fellow is so droll, he amuses me ; but as for the New Times, never bring that rascally paper to me again, sir ; the editor is one of the greatest ——.”

“ Oh ! my lord,” said a lady who was present, “ you should be more merciful.”

“ Madam, he deserves no mercy.” In short, I could not obtain a hearing for poor Dr. Stoddart, and he was remanded to my pocket without being looked at.

Lord St. Vincent felt particularly sore on this subject, it being ever associated in his mind with

the attacks made on his character by a gang of hired libellers, against whom he was compelled to file a string of affidavits in the Court of King's Bench.

When talking on these painful subjects, which we often did as we "walked the deck" in the dining-room, he would say, "Sir, I am a dead lion;" a severe and cutting sarcasm on those who fawned on him when in power, and insulted or neglected him when he had no longer any patronage to bestow.

He once referred to a naval dinner at Bath, which took place in 1802, and where his health was proposed, and refused to be drank by a part of the company, he being at the time first lord of the Admiralty. The party broke up in confusion almost immediately after: some drank the toast in a bumper, and left the room; others turned down their glasses and sat still. I was one of the guests, and never saw such a display of folly and ill-humour, "I heard who you all were, sir," said his lordship, "and I can tell you that there were men at that table who owed much to me." On another occasion, adverting to the same kind of topic, he said, "We expect too much of men; we do not make sufficient allowances, and perhaps we are too apt to over-rate the services we render them."

Among the naval friends who never forsook him to the last hour of his existence, and who often came down to Rochetts to stay with him,

were, Sir George Martin, Sir Edward Codrington, Sir George Cockburn, Lord Garlies (afterwards Earl of Gallaway), Sir George Grey, Admiral Markham, Sir Isaac Coffin, Griffiths Colpoys, the Earl of Northesk, (who had married a daughter of Mrs. Ricketts, Lord St. Vincent's sister); the late Admiral Matthew Scott. Among the ladies I only remember the Countess de Front; Mrs. Ricketts and her daughter, Lady Northesk, and grand-daughters, the Ladies Jane, Elizabeth, and Georgina Carnegie; the late Miss Knight, formerly, sub-governess to the Princess Charlotte of Wales, and Mrs. Rowland Stevenson, who, by a fortunate and premature death, was removed from the heavy affliction which in a few years afterwards overwhelmed her family.

The royal Dukes of Clarence and Sussex were occasional visitors, but I never had the honour of being there with them. Dr. Andrew Baird was his lordship's medical attendant, and I believe, for many years of his life, he never consulted any other person, having deservedly a very high opinion of his skill.

Sir Francis Chantrey was frequently a visitor at Rochetts, and on these occasions completed that valuable bust, which bears so striking a resemblance to the earl. He had nothing to do with his monument in St. Paul's Cathedral, which has no claim to public approbation, not conveying, to my

mind, the slightest traces of the features or character of the original.

The year before his death, I obtained permission to take down Mons. Carbonnier, a French artist, whose crayon-drawings appeared to me to be worthy of notice, and he executed that picture now in my possession, and from which the engraving in this work and the Naval History are taken. I think it the most exact resemblance ever produced of his lordship.

Punctuality was never infringed in the domestic economy of Rochetts : as the clock struck the hours of nine, one, six, and eight, breakfast, lunch, dinner, and tea were on the table. After tea his lordship generally took his rubber of cassino, and retired to bed at eleven.

It was a favourite maxim with him to "welcome the coming, speed the parting, guest." "You are determined to leave us, I find?" "Yes, my lord, I must be in town to-day." "Then go, sir, and the sooner you come back the better we shall like you."

Lord St. Vincent always disliked a man who made a difficulty, or went to work in a careless manner. He was fond of hearing the names of naval officers read over to him : when I have been with him, he has often begged me to read down the list, as it brought incidents to his mind : he walked the room as I read, and now

and then he would stop—"That is a fine fellow sir; a good man that, one of the right sort:" then again he would say, "Ah, that is one of my sins that I have got to answer for. He was one of my Lady Betty's hard bargains, and I was talked into it."

By the way, it was very rarely the case that he was "talked into" any thing, or talked out of any thing; for never was a man more firm or decided when once he had made up his mind, and that he usually did upon the most solid and mature consideration. Sometimes, no doubt, he was forced, as he admits in his letters, to give way to influence, which, even as a minister of the crown, he could not resist.

I remember a poor fellow, who was killed in the year 1808, when commanding a sloop of war: Lord St. Vincent, at the peace of Amiens, had determined to promote him; but this, unfortunately, the officer did not believe. He was at Plymouth, and ordered to take out despatches to the West-Indies. As soon as the order came down, he had the imprudence to demur: he begged to be allowed to come on shore; he had a wife and family, and it was peace; he did not think it would answer any purpose for him to go abroad. By return of post, the port-admiral was directed to open a certain packet, and take out the captain's commission intended for this officer on his arrival at Jamaica, and another man was appointed

to carry the sloop out. How many an officer have I known to blast all his prospects in the service, after years of hard and meritorious labour, by giving up his situation at the very moment he should have clung to it.—“ There is a tide in the affairs of men, which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune.” Nelson took the tide of flood; so did St. Vincent, and De Saumarez, Collingwood, Exmouth, and many others in our glorious profession.

Where a young person once commits himself to the sea service, he should make up his mind to take whatever may come. Men of fortune and influence may pick and choose, but their career is never glorious; it is only the *toujours prêt* who turn out the real heroes.

Lord St. Vincent professed a dislike to educating the poor; but he once put £50 into my hand, and said, “ I will thank you to give that to Miss Trelawney, at Somers-town. She is a great advocate for instructing the lower orders of Irish. I differ from her; but, as she thinks she can do good with it, let her have it.”

Lord St. Vincent never sat down to dinner, or saw the cloth removed, without returning thanks, and I never heard any improper or irreligious conversation at his table. Indeed, he was a thoroughly polished gentleman in his social intercourse, though a great enemy to hypocrisy and cant. His attachments, when once formed, were immoveable, because his judgment was so clear,

that he seldom erred in his choice. He read mankind with more quickness and accuracy than any one I ever knew : his eye was so keen and penetrating, that his friends used to say he looked through them. His voice was at times stentorian, and in his manner and person he often reminded me, in some respects, of Mr. Boswell's description of Dr. Johnson: he was not so tall, but stout-made, broad-chested, and had a remarkably commanding appearance. I never heard him rebuke a servant ; but if they misbehaved more than once, they were discharged. In his domestic circle he was as much beloved as Sir Roger de Coverley. During my acquaintance with his lordship, which was for the last ten years of his life, I never heard him speak ill of any one (with the exception of Dr. Stoddart); and of his political opponents he always spoke with respect.

I was staying with him in the month of January 1820, when King George the Third died. At the unusual sound of a servant's footsteps along the passage at half-past seven in the evening, his lordship exclaimed, " The king is dead, and here comes Calcott* to announce it!" Such was ex-

* Poor Calcott was a most exemplary man in his station. He died by his own hand, at Rochetta, to the great grief of his master and all the family. His accounts were found to be scrupulously exact, and the reason for the fatal act was never explained ; but it was supposed to have been caused by domestic affliction, which he carefully concealed from all in the mansion at Rochetta. Lord St. Vincent was greatly and seriously affected at this melancholy event, which took place a few months before his own death.

actly the fact ; the newspaper, with a black border, had been sent down express, I believe by Dr. Baird. His lordship was much grieved at this event, although he expected it : the next day he wrote a letter of condolence and congratulation to King George the Fourth.

CHAPTER XVI.

Journey to the South of France, *viâ* Dover, Calais, and Paris—Remarks—The arrival at Marseilles—Journey to Hyeres—Arrival at Hyeres—Kindness and respect shown to Lord St. Vincent by the authorities—The Viscount Missiessy—The dock-yard at Toulon—Lord St. Vincent quits Hyeres—Arrives at Paris—Observations on the captives confined in the Temple—Lord St. Vincent's incredulity respecting the murders of Captain Wright and Pichegru—Return to England—He consents to sit for his picture—His observations respecting the Brunswick and Vengeur—Lord St. Vincent receives the baton of an admiral of the fleet from the King—He pays his respects to his Majesty King George IV. on board the Royal Yacht—Letter from Sir Charles Paget—Last illness and death of the Earl of St. Vincent—Copy of his Commission as an Admiral of the Fleet.

THE increasing cough and declining health of the Earl of St. Vincent began to give serious alarm to his friends, and in the summer of 1818, he made up his mind to try the effects of change of air, by a journey to the south of France. At his advanced age, no great improvement could be expected from such a step; but, if temporary relief could be obtained, it was deemed worth the trial. Dr. Grey, my eldest sister, and myself, were invited to be of the party; and we set off from Rochetts on the 1st day of October, in his

lordship's barouche with four post-horses. We had a German courier, named Joseph Reitechoffer, who preceded us on horseback, and his lordship's valet, the faithful Boxall, sat on the dickey.

The courier was one of the most intelligent men of his class I ever met with. He had, indeed, seen a great deal of military service in the early part of his life,—though he was, even then, only twenty-eight years of age. He had been present in many campaigns as a soldier in the French army, and his last was the memorable retreat from Moscow, when he was valet to General Lauriston. He was admirably adapted for his occupation of courier;—active, indefatigable, honest, sober, faithful, and well acquainted with the French, Italian, and German languages.

We travelled leisurely, crossing the Thames at Tilbury Fort, and proceeding through Rochester. On the 4th, we embarked at Dover, on board the Lord Duncan packet, commanded by Captain Hamilton; the same officer who conveyed to the admiral the account of the Dutch fleet being at sea, and was the cause of the British fleet coming out so quickly from Yarmouth Roads, and fighting the memorable battle of Camperdown. We landed at Calais in two hours after our embarkation: Captain (the late Rear-Admiral) John Tower was with us, but he parted at Calais. On the 6th we set off for Paris, and we were already

delighted by the rapid improvement which change of air and climate was making in his lordship's health.

As we proceeded on our journey, I was amused with a mistake of the unsophisticated country-folks of France, who took Boxall, the valet (who exclusively occupied the dickey) for his master. Boxall was a man who might well be shown as a good specimen of English feeding: he wore his livery, and a broad silver band round his hat; and the people exclaimed as we passed, "*Voilà un vrai milor Anglais! voilà un homme comme il faut par exemple!*"

We passed on pretty rapidly to Marseilles, where we remained a few days to rest ourselves, and look at the place; after which we proceeded to Toulon, through the pass of Auliol, where a road had been cut by order of Napoleon.

On reaching Hyeres, a village, with a ruined castle, standing on the shores of the famous bay of that name, Lord St. Vincent took possession of a large mansion, which had been hired for him.

It is proper to observe here, that I was compelled to return to England in November; consequently, the little that I have to relate respecting Lord St. Vincent's residence in Provence, I have received from my sister—who, with Miss Knight, Dr. Grey, and some other English friends, continued with him all the winter. I did not, however, leave his lordship until I had visited the arsenal at

Toulon, which, alone, is well worth a journey to the south of France, even under less pleasant circumstances than attended my visit. At that time, the health of the noble earl was not sufficiently restored to enable him to accompany me, and I went alone, with a letter to Vice-Admiral the Viscount Missiessy, a very distinguished naval officer under Napoleon, and also under his successors. The vice-admiral, after I came away, repeated his invitation to the earl to visit the dock-yard at Toulon, and to name those whom he would wish to accompany him, and he accepted the invitation ; but having learned that he was to be received with military honours, and that a salute was to be fired on his entering the gates, he hesitated, and desired a friend to write privately to Madame Missiessy, and to request that she would use her influence with the admiral to prevent its being done. Madame Missiessy replied, that it certainly had been the intention of the admiral to receive his lordship with the same honours as were paid to a member of the royal family ; and that he was prompted to do so from his own inclination, even had he not received orders to the same effect from Paris : but since his lordship did not wish it, a guard would merely be turned out at the gate, and his carriage admitted to drive in ; a privilege granted only to the royal family and to the commander-in-chief.

I should observe, that all the authorities of that part of the country waited on his lordship soon after his arrival, and showed him every mark of respect in their power; as they called him "*Le doyen de tous les amiraux de l'Angleterre.*"

In a postscript to a letter from my sister, of the above date, Lord St. Vincent thus kindly and flatteringly addresses me :

"I am chargeable with all the injunctions contained in the letter of your sister, having urged her with all my might to "*sing out*"* for more frequent communications, because your letters are fraught with more interesting materials than any we receive, and we count upon one lodged with Mr. William Hamilton (at the Foreign Office) every Tuesday and Friday morning, during the ensuing month; and I request Mrs. Edward Brenton to give you a jog on each of those days. Pray say every thing kind to her on my part, and be assured that I always am, with the greatest regard and esteem,

Yours most truly,

St. VINCENT."

Lord St. Vincent continued to reside at Hyeres until the spring of 1819. During the winter, which is the healthiest time of the year in the south of France, he enjoyed the company of his friends, regained his health, and appetite, and his spirits rose in such a manner as proved the benefit he had derived from his excursion. He was joined here by his friend Miss Knight, the Rev. Thomas Halford, General Jenkinson, Capt.

* A phrase peculiar to the sea service.

Robert Fanshawe of the Royal Navy, and many others, who enjoyed the pleasure of his society during the winter.

Although Lord St. Vincent was passing his time so much to his own satisfaction in the south of France, his friends in England were naturally impatient for his return, and urged it with so much earnestness, that on the 12th April 1819, he set off for the capital of France, where he had previously invited me to meet him, and accompany him back to England. The spring proved cold and wet, and his lordship relapsed into his former bad health, and did not perfectly recover until he got back to England. At Paris he resided at the Hotel de Douvres, in the Rue de la Paix, where he had a very handsome suite of apartments.

In looking back to my memoranda, May 1819, I find the following remarks: " This morning, went to the place where the Temple once stood, in which the royal family was confined; the ground is now occupied by a convent, of which the Princess of Condé is the superior. The old man who showed us the place has a model of the Temple as it was, when it became the scene of such horror in the revolution; it was pulled down by order of Bonaparte, who, it is said, had a superstitious fear that he should end his days in it. " Conscience makes cowards of us all."

In the model, we were shown all the apartments in which the late King, the Queen, Princess Royal, Madame Elizabeth, and the Dauphin were confined; also those of Sir Sydney Smith, Captain Wright, and General Pichegru. That the two latter were murdered by order of Bonaparte I was always convinced, and the old man's evidence seemed to confirm my suspicions. He told me that Wright was found with his throat cut from ear to ear; he was lying in his bed, the clothes of which were pulled up to his chin, while his arms were extended along his side, and the bloody razor lay on the pillow (this was surely not the act of our gallant countryman). A scuffle had been heard in his room in the night, and the next morning presented the scene just described. This exactly corresponds with what Sir Arthur Paget told me in 1806. Poor Pichegru was found strangled in his bed, no doubt by the same people, and as no person could enter the Temple without an order from Bonaparte, I can have no difficulty in believing that he was the instigator of these foul murders. On my return to the hotel, I mentioned these facts to Lord St. Vincent; but he seemed to be still incredulous.

About the 28d of May we returned to Calais, and after a very pleasant voyage across the Channel, arrived safe at Rochetts.

Age was now making sad havoc with Lord St. Vincent's robust and manly frame; but in his mind no change was perceived, even to the last:

it was as strong and as clear as it had been in his best days. I now arrive with deep regret at the last scenes of my illustrious friend's life. His lordship had always felt and expressed a very sincere regard for my cousin, Captain John Brenton, at that time a commander in the navy, and he used his utmost endeavour with the whole Board of Admiralty to get him made a captain, in which he succeeded only the year before his own death. This was some proof that Lord Melville, who was then at the head of the Admiralty, bore him no ill-will for the part he had taken in the naval enquiry, and it is highly creditable to him.

Before I had brought out my first volume, (first edition) of *Naval History*, I had a great desire to procure a good picture of Lord St. Vincent, from an original drawing; and I requested my sister to ask him if he would do me the favour to sit to an artist, whom I engaged to take down with me, to take his portrait in crayons. In reply she wrote, "Lord St. Vincent says, tell your brother we shall be glad to see him and his chalker on Monday morning, and he shall have as many sittings as he likes."

At that time Lady Northesk, and her daughters, Ladies Elizabeth, and the late Georgina Carnegie, and Lord Rosehill the present Earl of Northesk, were staying there. I went down on the appointed day with Mons. Carbonnier; and he executed the likeness, not only to my satisfac-

tion, but, I believe, to that of every one who ever saw his lordship. He always on these occasions, and at all other times, wore his purple velvet cap, which I have, therefore, allowed to form part of his costume.

In one of her letters written shortly after, my sister says, “ we got on with your history yesterday, as far as Cornwallis’ retreat. In the narrative of the 1st of June, Lord St. Vincent observed, that you had said rather more of the Brunswick than was necessary. “ However,” he added, “ you need not tell your brother so, as he could not alter it now, and many people, particularly the Harveys, will like it.” Here, I believe, his lordship was mistaken; I have reason to know that the Harvys did *not* like it. But whether I had said too much or too little of their gallant relative, I never could learn. See Appendix, p. 391.

I am now come to the last *public* event of my illustrious friend’s eventful life ; on this occasion I use the words of the Naval History (vol. v. p. 287, 1st edit.):—“ On the 10th of August, 1822, his Majesty George the Fourth, having long entertained a desire to visit the northern part of his kingdom, embarked on board of his yacht, the Royal George, commanded by Captain the Hon. Charles Paget, lying off the Royal Hospital at Greenwich. It was on this occasion that he took leave of his oldest naval friend and faithful counsellor, the Earl of St. Vincent. The venerable peer, then

in the eighty-eighth year of his age, and in the costume in which he is represented in the first volume of this work, went on board the yacht to receive his Majesty. The king, with that kindness of manner, and gentlemanly demeanour, for which he was justly celebrated, took the veteran by the arm, and led him to a seat on the quarter-deck, where his Majesty placed himself beside him, and they conversed for some time, in presence of the most crowded and numerous circle of spectators which had perhaps ever met together so near the metropolis. The acclamations at this gratifying scene were heard far distant on the banks of the Thames; and the pensioners of Greenwich Hospital were the appropriate witnesses of this tribute of respect, from the greatest of monarchs to one of the most celebrated of his admirals. On the year of his coronation, his Majesty had presented the Earl with a baton of admiral of the fleet. It was conveyed to his seat at Rochetts by a special messenger, with a very gracious letter dictated by his Majesty, and written by Sir Benjamin Bloomfield.* It was in consequence of having received this signal mark of favour from his sovereign, that the gallant admiral resolved to make the exertion of returning thanks in person, on the element where it was acquired. On taking leave, his Majesty

* The baton was a stick about eighteen inches long, covered with purple velvet, surmounted with a lion and crown in solid gold, and ornamented with fleur-de-lis of the same metal.

presented his arm to his aged friend, who leaned on it, and the King of Great Britain was seen descending the side of his yacht to assist the Earl of St. Vincent into the boat. After this affecting attention, the yacht slipped her moorings, and being taken in tow by a steam-boat, was conveyed with rapidity down the river, amidst the applauses and congratulations of a grateful and loyal people.

To the Earl of St. Vincent, G.C.B., &c. &c. &c.

Carlton House, Tuesday 6th, 4 P.M.

My dear Lord,

I have just been with the King, and I expressed to his Majesty your lordship's desire to be on board the yacht, to receive his Majesty on his embarkation; and I am commanded by his Majesty to say, that it will give him great pleasure to see you on board the Royal George, on Saturday morning the 10th instant.

I hasten to communicate to your lordship his Majesty having deferred his embarkation till Saturday, thinking that your lordship may receive this letter in time to prevent your quitting Rochetts to-morrow, which I have heard was the intention of your lordship; and as I shall communicate to Sir Richard Keats and Sir George Grey that I have written to apprise you of the ship's movements, they will act accordingly.

I have the honour to be,

My dear Lord,

Your lordship's most faithful

and obedient servant,

CHARLES PAGET.*

* Now Vice Admiral Sir Charles Paget, K.C.B., Commander-in-chief at Jamaica.

It was in the month of March 1823, that Lord St. Vincent was attacked with that general break up of his constitution which ended fatally. My eldest sister, who was constantly with him to the last moment, saw what she considered alarming symptoms, and immediately sent off an express to town for Dr. Baird. The doctor arrived the same evening, and as he entered the drawing-room where the venerable earl sat, playing his rubber of cassino, his lordship turned his head round and said, "Ah! Baird, so you have come to see the last of me." And he did see the last of his noble friend and benefactor, whom he had watched with skill and fidelity for a long series of years.

The following is an extract of the letter from my sister, which conveyed to me the news of the

"The awful event which has deprived us of our best and truest friend, took place last evening, at nine o'clock, apparently with little pain. I had the comfort of being with his lordship near four hours in the course of the day. Once when he groaned, I asked if he was in pain? He replied, 'I cannot say that I feel any pain, it is only weariness.' He asked if I had heard from my sisters; I said yes, and my brother too, and that they all desired to be particularly remembered to his lordship. He replied, 'I beg you will remember me very particularly to them.'

"Mrs. Markham has earnestly requested me not to leave Rochetts till after the funeral. Nothing can be kinder than her behaviour during the melancholy period. The Doctor, Sir George Grey, and Mr. Tucker, go to town this afternoon;—the last returns to-morrow, being one of the executors."

melancholy end of the Earl of St. Vincent. It is dated Rochetts, March 14, 1823 :—

Thus ended the life of the Earl of St. Vincent, just as he had completed his eighty-eighth year. His character must be searched for in his actions, which I have related in as impartial a manner as the frailty of human nature will permit.

It would not be consistent with the scope and the object of this work, for me to enter into a lengthened estimate of Lord St. Vincent's claims on the gratitude of his country and the admiration of posterity; I shall therefore close my unambitious record of his eventful life, by expressing a belief, which will be echoed by all who have duly acquainted themselves with the circumstances of his career,—namely, that the Earl of St. Vincent must ever rank among the greatest naval commanders that any age or country has produced.

COPY OF THE COMMISSION

*Given to the Earl of St. Vincent, appointing him an
Admiral of the Fleet.*

By the Commissioners for executing the office of Lord High Admiral of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and all his Majesty's plantations.

By virtue of the power and authority to us given, we do hereby constitute you an Admiral of the Fleet, willing and requiring you to take upon you the charge and command of his Majesty's said fleet, as Admiral and Commander-in-chief accordingly, and authorizing and requiring you, whenever you shall receive an order to hoist your flag, to wear the union at the main-topmast head, on board such ship of his Majesty's said fleet, where you shall happen at any time to be, hereby willing and requiring all captains and commanders and other officers and companies of the said fleet, to obey you as their Admiral and Commander-in-chief: and you likewise to observe and execute all such orders and instructions, as you shall from time to time receive from us the Lord High Admiral of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, or the Commissioners for executing the office of Lord High Admiral of Great Britain and Ireland &c. for the time being: and we do hereby authorize you, whenever you shall receive our order to hoist your flag as aforesaid, in case of any neglect or disability, or other default or defect of any of the said officers or seamen, to displace them and appoint and constitute others in their

stead, until our pleasure shall be made known, and for so doing this shall be your warrant.

Given under our hands and the seal of the Office of Admiralty, the 19th day of July 1821, in the second year of his Majesty's reign.

MELVILLE.

G. COCKBURN.

H. HOTHAM.

By command of their lordships.

J. W. Croker.

In consequence of this commission there were two Admirals of the Fleet, his Royal Highness the Duke of Clarence being the senior.

A P P E N D I X.

No. I.

THE BREAKWATER IN PLYMOUTH SOUND.

As a great national work like that of the Breakwater at Plymouth Sound, cannot be other than a matter of general public interest, and as the origin of this sublime undertaking (for it is nothing less) must unquestionably be attributed to the Earl St. Vincent, I shall make no apology for placing on record certain details concerning it, by way of Appendix to this work.

In proof of the fact, that this noble monument of English genius and enterprize owes its origin to Lord St. Vincent, I shall give an extract from a letter I received from Mr. Benjamin Tucker, of Trematon Castle, dated December 22, 1819. Mr. Tucker had long been private secretary to the earl, and also second secretary to the Admiralty.

22d December 1819.

“ The honour of originally proposing the Breakwater in Plymouth Sound having been disputed, I can declare, that his lordship was the real father of it. Lord Grey has not the least pretensions to it, for it was suffered to sleep most profoundly, during the whole time that he presided at the Admiralty; but was brought forward by Mr. Grenville, on the sole ground, that it had been recommended by the most competent judge, Lord St. Vincent, in his memorial to the

King in Council ; and orders were then given *to me*, for its being immediately carried into execution ; which our sudden turn-out the following week prevented ; after which it had another nap, until Mr. Yorke again brought forward his lordship's memorial. Whoever may have to record his lordship's great and glorious achievements, for the safety, benefit, and honour of the country, will not omit that of the Breakwater."

From the report of Mr. John Rennie and Mr. Joseph Whidbey to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, on the 21st April 1806, I make the following extracts:—

" There is probably no harbour on the south-west coast of England, so well situated as Plymouth Sound, for the stationing of his Majesty's fleets that are to oppose the navies of France and Spain. The bay is extensive, the entrance to Hamoaze is deep, its capacity is great, and the anchoring-ground and places for mooring of ships are excellent. A numerous fleet may find accommodation there ; and the magnitude of the dock-yard enhances its importance as a naval station.

" Possessing such natural advantages as Plymouth does, it is remarkable that nothing has hitherto been done to improve the Sound, and render it a proper and secure anchorage for ships of war.

" The valuable information we received from the Earl of St. Vincent, previous to our journey to Plymouth, tended greatly to lessen our inquiries, and we trust that what we are about to prepare, will be the means of rendering Plymouth Sound a safe anchoring-place for ships of war, from whatever point the winds may blow, or however heavy the swell may be."

It was not before the opinions of the best engineers, men of science, and naval officers eminent in their professions, had been collected, compared, and seriously considered, that the

Admiralty resolved to carry into execution this great undertaking, the most important, perhaps, that ever was executed for the glory of the empire and safety of the British navy. Before the formation of this work, the Sound bore so bad a character among naval officers, that Lord Howe used to say, it would one day be the grave of the British fleet.

That the idea originated with Lord St. Vincent, and that he was the first promoter of it, seems undisputed; although for its accomplishment, the nation is chiefly indebted to the late Right Hon. Charles Yorke,* uncle of the present Earl of Hardwicke, and who was First Lord of the Admiralty in 1812. On the 12th of August in that year, being the anniversary of the birth-day of his Royal Highness the Prince Regent, afterwards George IV., the first stone was laid.

The following details of this work are from a pamphlet published in 1820, written, I believe, by Lieutenant Cooke, R.N.

ESTIMATE of the probable Expense of a Breakwater and Pier, for the sheltering of Plymouth Sound and Bouvi-sand Bay.

| | |
|--|------------|
| To 2,000,000 of tons of limestone, in blocks of from one and-a-half to two tons weight, in the Breakwater, | |
| 7s. 6d. per ton | £.750,000 |
| To 360,000 tons, in the pier proposed to be built from Audurn Point, 7s. | 126,000 |
| Contingencies, say at £20 per cent. on the whole | 175,200 |
| | <hr/> |
| | £1,051,200 |

* Admiral Sir Joseph Sydney Yorke, father of the Earl, was drowned together with the Captains Bradby and Young, on the 5th May 1831, while going in a boat from Portsmouth to Hamble; the boat was struck with lightning, and all on board killed near Monkton Fort.

ESTIMATE of the probable Expense of a Cut-stone Pier, and two Light-Houses, to be built on the top of the great Breakwater.

| | |
|---|----------------------|
| To 42,000 cubic yards of masonry, in the out and inside walls of the pier, 27s. | £44,700 |
| To 62,000 cubic yards of rubble filling, between the out and inside walls of the pier, 6s. per yard | 18,600 |
| To paving the top of the pier with large blocks of stone, 8,500 square yards | 22,950 |
| To two light houses, with reflectors and Argand lamps | 5,000 |
| Contingencies, £20. per cent | 28,650 |
| | <hr/> £119,900 <hr/> |

Further REPORT of Mr. Rennie, to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, dated 24th September 1806, on the same subject.

London, Sept. 24, 1806.

“ My Lords,

“ In consequence of your lordships’ directions, I have considered what appears to me the best manner of proceeding with the various preparations for carrying into execution the great Mole or Breakwater, proposed to be constructed in Plymouth Sound. I beg leave to state the following, as what occurs for that purpose.

“ The first and most material step is to procure a sufficient quantity of rock, which may be quarried, for the Breakwater.

“ The greatest part of the margins of Plymouth Sound, Cawsand Bay, and Catwater, may be said to be rock ; but, except what is at the upper end of the Sound between Plymouth-dock and what is in Catwater, the rest is all rock, apparently much intersected with fissures. To raise stones thereof of large magnitude from such places, proper

for this purpose, will, I doubt, be attended with great expense, as well as much delay. It is, however, possible, that after quarries are opened in several of these places, the rock may turn out to be more suitable to the purpose than what, on a cursory inspection, they appear capable of affording.

“ The rock at the head of the Sound, which lies between Plymouth and Dock, is mostly limestone; and a considerable part of it appears very suitable to the purpose in question, as well as most of the rock in Catwater. The sides of Plymouth Sound and Cawsand Bay are very much exposed, according as the winds blow: Cawsand Bay, and all towards Mount Edgcumbe, to south, south-easterly, and easterly winds; Bouvisand Bay, Staddon Point within the Withy Hedge, and all the head of the Sound, to south, south-westerly, and westerly winds. And as these are the prevailing winds in this country, the seas that break on these shores are such as to prevent the possibility (if the winds are at all considerable) of vessels taking in cargoes of stone from places so exposed.

“ The interior part of Catwater, where the principal quarries are, is sheltered from all winds; and though the distance from the work to be performed is greater than many of the other places, and although going into and coming out of it is more difficult, yet the advantage of being able to load at all times, and lie in security when loaded, is so great, that it is peculiarly eligible, for such a work as this. I have, therefore, to advise, that the rock around the Sound and Bay should be tried, and such places as will produce proper stone be purchased, that advantage may be taken of them when the winds and weather will permit. But I am persuaded that Catwater will ultimately be found the best, and, indeed, the principal place from which the great supply of stones must be procured, and

therefore that the great purchases should be made there. The rock is also known to be suitable to the purpose; a sufficiency should therefore be procured there for the principal part of the work.

“ The quantity of limestone rock in Catwater is very great: I have given a person directions to survey it, but this will require time. After I have got his report, I shall state the particulars to your lordships.

“ I know it will be urged by the proprietors of the rock in Catwater, of what immense advantage it is to the country, as a manure; and I fully believe the truth and extent of this assertion. But I would propose that all the rock or stone which is not fit for the purpose of the Breakwater, be sold to the country for lime, at a price something under what they now pay. It is as good for their purpose as the large stones, and as it will come cheaper, they will be considerable gainers. By this, the public will also be gainers, by selling what is not fit for their purpose. But I will suppose that in time all this rock should be exhausted; still there is enough between Plymouth and Dock for the purposes of the country, for many centuries to come; and when the Breakwater is completed, this situation will be so sheltered, as to enable small vessels to frequent it with great ease.

“ Supposing a sufficient quantity of rock to be purchased in the Catwater, and in the other situations I have mentioned, it appears to me that this rock should be parcelled out in lots or pieces, and that these pieces should be given to different people, and who, supplied with a certain number of convicts, should be paid a certain price per ton for the quantity of stones they quarry and deliver on board of vessels.

LETTER from Mr. Rennie to J. W. Croker, Esq. dated 15th April 1811, with an estimate of the expense wanted in the first year.

“ Sir :

“ Agreeably to the request of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, signified to me in your letter of the 8th instant, I have taken into consideration the steps proper to be taken for the purpose of commencing the works of the Breakwater, intended to be built in Plymouth Sound ; and beg leave to recommend to their lordships’ consideration the following, as the most likely, in my opinion, to forward that measure with advantage and economy to the public.

“ The first step which appears to me necessary to be taken, is to appoint a fit and proper person to superintend and manage the execution of the whole of the works, and in whose assiduity, skill, and integrity, the utmost reliance can be placed.

“ This person will require several assistants ; some to act in the capacity of surveyors and superintendents of the stone quarries ; others in the direction of the vessels to be employed in the conveyance and deposition of the stone ; and others to keep accounts, and to check the returns of the quantity of work performed.

“ The principal superintendent, with his assistants, should proceed as early as convenient to Plymouth, for the purpose of surveying and marking out the most suitable places to supply the requisite quantity of stone, and where the piers should be built for loading the vessels that are to convey the stone to, and deposit it in, the Breakwater. The quantity of stone round the margins of Plymouth Sound, and fit for the purposes of the Breakwater, are immense.

“ When the places to supply the stone, and for the other purposes of the Breakwater, are marked out, it will then be for their lordships to give the necessary directions, to procure a sufficiency to complete the whole work, and to afford the other conveniences required.

“ While the foregoing operations are in hand, two mooring chains, of the length of about 1,200 yards each, having their links about two inches diameter, should be procured, as well as four anchors to keep them in their places: one of these chains to be laid beyond the extremity of the outer base, and another beyond the extremity of the inner base or straight part of the Breakwater. And besides these, about fifty smaller chains will be wanted, of various lengths, from seven to ten fathoms each, with buoys, to be attached to the large chains, for the vessels to make fast to, while they are depositing their cargoes in the line of the Breakwater.

“ It is probable these chains may be obtained from among the unserviceable mooring chains in the dock-yard; and I should apprehend craft can be spared, with the necessary assistance, to lay them down in the direction of the intended Breakwater. But a stationary vessel, with several boats, will be wanted for the use of the works.

The building of the piers at which the vessels are to be loaded, should be put in hand as soon as the ground is procured; and the quarries to supply the stone should also be opened. These, I apprehend, can all be got done by contract, as well as the necessary number of cranes (not less than twenty) for loading the vessels.

“ Vessels also, I would hope, might be procured, to convey such of the stone as are of a moderate size, by contract. But I fear it would be difficult, if not impracticable, to procure such vessels on the coast as will be wanted for conveying the large blocks of stone, that must be used in the casing of the outside slope of the Breakwater, as these

vessels will require to be made of a particular construction, with machinery adapted to the moving of large masses of stone. I would, therefore, submit to their lordships' consideration, whether it would not be advisable to direct ten or twelve such vessels to be built. They will not be wanted until the ensuing spring: and if contractors for this kind of work can be got, these vessels might either be sold to them, or let on proper conditions, and their being ready will greatly accelerate the work.

"I cannot venture to encourage their lordships to expect that much, if any, of the actual work of the Breakwater itself will be performed in course of the present year; as the preparations will necessarily require much time; which I fear will consume the most, if not the whole, of the present season.

"I have annexed an estimate of the probable amount that will be required for the operations of the present year.

"I am, &c.

(Signed) "JOHN RENNIE."

J. W. Croker, Esq.

ESTIMATE of the probable Amount of Money that will be required for the works in Plymouth Sound in the course of the present Year.

| | |
|--|---------------|
| Mooring chains, anchors, small chains, buoys, and laying them down..... | £5,500 |
| A stationary vessel, with boats | 2,600 |
| Purchase of land for quarries, and other purposes, uncertain; but say..... | 20,000 |
| Opening quarries, building piers, erecting cranes, and other conveniences | 10,000 |
| Ten vessels for the conveyance of large stone, with their requisite machinery; say for this year | 15,000 |
| Probable deposition of stone, and various miscellaneous articles | 6,900 |
| | <hr/> £60,000 |

The principal objection started against constructing the Breakwater, was, that it might cause the anchorage in the Sound to be destroyed, in the course of time, by the deposition of mud and silt along the whole eddy within it. There does not, however, appear to be any solid ground for this objection. The water brought by the tides from the sea is at all times perfectly clear and transparent, and that which proceeds from Hamoaze, and supplied by the Tamar and the Tavy, is almost wholly free from any alluvial matter, these rivers holding their course through a fine granite soil. The fact is sufficiently proved by the circumstance of no deposition taking place in the recesses of Hamoaze along the dock-yard wall, which lead into the docks, nor in the numerous eddies that are caused by the projecting jetties and salient angles of that wall. Another objection started against the undertaking was, that by the diminished quantity of water thrown in by the tide into Hamoaze and Catwater, the Sound would gradually fill up, and these harbours be destroyed. No perceptible alteration, however, has as yet taken place in the height of the water in Hamoaze, or in the strength or set of the tides.

A rock of lime-stone, or rather grey marble, situated at Oreston, on the eastern shore of Catwater, consisting of a surface of twenty-five acres, was purchased from the Duke of Bedford, for the sum of £10,000; quays for shipping the stone were erected in front of it; iron railways leading from the quarries to the quays were laid down; ships were hired by contract to carry off the stone, and others built at the dock-yard. Mr. Whidbey was appointed to superintend the work. The quarries were opened on the 7th August, 1812, the first stone deposited on the 12th of the same month, and on the 31st March, 1813, the Breakwater made its first appearance above the surface of the Sound at low water of the spring-tide. The system of quarrying the

stone is conducted with admirable skill, and stones of the proper size obtained with less waste of small rubble than might be expected. In working these quarries an extraordinary phenomenon was discovered.*

The vessels employed for carrying off the large blocks of stone are of a peculiar construction, adapted to convey with ease masses of marble weighing from three to five tons each. These great blocks of marble are placed on trucks at the quarries, and run down from thence on iron railways to the quays, against which the vessels lie with their sterns. The two stern ports are made sufficiently large to receive the trucks with the stones upon them. Each truck is passed separately through the port-hole, on an inclined plane, and run to the forepart of the vessel, in the hold, on an iron railway.

The two sides of the hold of the vessel are calculated each to contain eight of these loaded trucks, which, at five tons on each truck, gives eighty tons of stone for one cargo. The stones thus placed on the trucks, remain until the vessel arrives at the point in the line of the Breakwater where they are to be deposited. By means of a crane on the deck of the vessel, the two trucks nearest to the two stern ports are then drawn up the inclined plane, and run upon a frame on moveable hinges, called the *typing-frame*; by the falling of this frame, in the manner of a trap-door, the stone or stones are discharged from the trucks on the slope of the Breakwater; but the *typing-frame* remains, by

* In the very body of the great mass of this old marble rock, at the depth of sixty-five feet from the summit of the rock, and twenty-five from the margin of the sea, a cavity, or rather a nodule of clay was discovered, of twenty-five feet long and twelve square, or thereabouts, in the midst of which were found several bones of the rhinoceros, in a more perfect state, and containing less animal matter in them, than any fossil bones that have yet been dug out of rock or earth.

means of a catch, in the position in which it is left at the moment of discharging the stones, until the empty truck is pulled up by the crane to the after part of the deck, from whence it is run forward to make room for the second pair of loaded trucks in the hold. The catch being now disengaged, the typing-frame returns to its former position, ready to receive the next pair of loaded trucks; and so on until the whole sixteen have been discharged, and the light trucks run upon the deck of the vessel, ready to be run out at the quay, and from thence to the quarries to take in fresh loads of stone. In this manner a cargo of eighty tons may be discharged in the space of forty or fifty minutes. The vessels are placed in the proper places for depositing the stones by means of buoys, and the exact line of the Breakwater is preserved by observing lights or staves placed at a distance on the shore.

Ten vessels of this construction, for carrying large masses of stone, built in the King's yards, and forty-three hired by contract, averaging about fifty tons each, are employed in conveying stones from the quarries. The contractors' vessels are not of the same construction as those in the immediate employ of Government; they carry stones of less weight, which are hoisted out of the hold by a chain and windlass, and thrown overboard. A load of fifty tons is discharged from one of these vessels in about three hours. By all these vessels, the quantity of stone deposited in 1812 was 16,045 tons; in 1813, 171,198 tons; in 1814, 239,480 tons; in 1815, 264,207; and in 1816, up to the 12th of August, 206,033 tons; at which time the total quantity of stone sunk amounted to 896,963 tons, and at the conclusion of the year to upwards of 1,000,000 tons.

Of this quantity, the proportions of the different sizes of the blocks deposited are nearly as follows:—

| | Tons. |
|---------------------------------------|---------|
| Of one ton each stone and under..... | 423,904 |
| — one to three tons each..... | 309,706 |
| — three to five tons each,..... | 150,593 |
| — five tons and upwards,..... | 12,760 |

The greatest quantity of stone sunk in any one week was 15,379 tons; and the part of the Breakwater, at the above-mentioned date, above the level of low water spring-tides, was in length 1,100 yards. The length completely finished to the height of three feet above the level of the highest spring-tides, and thirty feet wide at top, was at the same time 360 feet. The large stones of the upper part of the Breakwater are deposited to any nicety by means of a vessel constructed for the purpose, having the same sheer or slope at the bow with the side of the work, so that, by a projecting beam or mast, the largest stones can be taken out of the vessel, and placed on the opposite side, or middle, or any other part of the Breakwater.*

Quantity of stone deposited up to August, 1820:

| | Tons. |
|--|--------------|
| From 13th August, 1816, to 12th August, 1817 | 220,405 |
| 1817, | 1818 169,219 |
| 1818, | 1819 225,400 |
| 1819, | 1820 228,852 |

The result of this great work has completely answered the expectation of its warmest advocates. The good effects of it were, indeed, very sensibly felt at the end of the second year, when about eight hundred yards of the central part, where the water was shallowest, were visible at low water

* The small establishment, and the quick manner with which this great work has been carried on, form a curious contrast with the multitudes employed on the Breakwater of Cherbourg, the time occupied by that undertaking, and the parade and ostentation with which it was conducted.

spring-tides. The swell was then so much broken down and destroyed at the head of the Sound, that the fishermen were no longer able, as heretofore, to judge of the weather outside the Sound; and ships of all sizes, and, among others, a large French three-decker, ran in with confidence, and anchored behind the Breakwater. Since that, near two hundred sail of vessels of all descriptions, driven in by tempestuous weather, have, at one time, found shelter within this insulated mole, where a fleet of twenty-five to thirty sail of the line may, at all times, find a secure and convenient anchorage, with the additional advantage of having a stream of excellent water from a reservoir constructed above Bouvisand Bay, capable of containing from ten to twelve thousand tons, or a quantity sufficient to water fifty sail of the line. This water is brought down in iron-pipes to Staddon Point, opposite to the anchorage, where it is intended to build a jetty from which the water will descend through the pipes into the ships' boats.

During the winter of 1816-7, the gales of wind were more frequent and tremendous than had been known for many years; and on the night of the 19th January, such a hurricane came on as had not been remembered by the oldest inhabitant: the tide rose six feet higher than the usual height of spring-tides. The Jasper sloop of war, and the Telegraph schooner, being anchored without the cover of the Breakwater, were driven to the head of the Sound, and both lost; but a collier, deeply laden, and under its cover, rode out the gale; and it was the general opinion, from former experience, that if no Breakwater had existed, the whole of the ships in Catwater must have been wrecked, and the storehouses and magazines on the victualling premises, and most of the buildings on the margin of the sea, been entirely swept away.

Four years after this pamphlet was published, *i. e.*, in the gale of November 1824, the most remarkable in its

violence and effects since that of 1708, the Breakwater was seriously injured ; but the damage which it received prevented infinitely more in Catwater and the Sound, which, without its friendly aid, would have been fearfully exposed.

[The following letter offers further proof as to the original idea of the Breakwater being due to Earl St. Vincent.]

To Rear-Admiral Markham.

“ Hibernia, off Black Rock, 28th March 1806.

“ My dear Admiral.

* * * * “ In the winter months, Cawsand Bay is a very unfit place for large ships to resort to, dangerous in the extreme ; and such a swell, that five days out of seven, nothing can lay alongside of them. The captains are ashore, and the lieutenants will not turn out in the night, to strike the yards and topmasts, and veer cable in time. The vigilance of Penn* has preserved some from inevitable destruction. Plymouth Sound is become shoaler than it was, and if the embankments forming above Catwater are not put an immediate stop to, and the tide suffered to flow as formerly, not only Catwater will be ruined, but the Sound too. Messrs. Rennie and Co. will explain this in their report, and I see no other chance of resisting the insatiable ambition of the ruler of France, but making Plymouth Sound a secure Mole, at any expense ; for the difficulty of getting out of Falmouth Harbour is so great in winter time, that it cannot be depended on. In other respects, much may be made of it.”

“ Yours ever,

“ ST. VINCENT.”

* The highly-respected master-attendant at Cawsand for many years, during the late war.

No. 2.

ADDITIONAL REMARKS, &c. on the Battle of the 1st June.

With reference to this subject, I may be excused for introducing an anonymous letter which I received only on the 24th February last. Writers who give to the public articles which they are either ashamed or afraid to put their names to, deserve little notice. Nevertheless, as it contains a charge against myself, and may be the means of rendering justice to the memory of the captain of the *Vengeur*, I hold it to be a sacred duty, in this instance at least, to lay it before the tribunal of public and professional judgment.

The letter is as follows:—

“ Sir;—In your *Naval History of Great Britain*, vol. p. 130, when speaking of the *Vengeur*, you say, that she went down with the English *Jack* flying over the Republican; which was not the case. Having been for some little time engaged with the *Royal George*, she afterwards dropped astern, being dismasted, but still keeping up her fire; during a momentary cessation, Captain Domett hailed her from the poop of the *Royal George*, and asked her captain if she had struck? with a view to save the lives of her crew; to which question he received for answer, that he would [strike] if a boat was sent for him, but that if on board he struck his colours, he should be sacrificed by his people. Captain Domett assured him, that every boat he had was stove, and he had none to send him. Then, said the *Vengeur's* cap-

tain, I will give you a gun for my honour; and before the Royal George's men could draw their heads in from the ports on the larboard side, or the gangway could be cleared from those whom curiosity had brought together, he discharged a broadside rakingly into the Royal George, and did more mischief than the whole previous action had effected, and incensed the crew so much, that, in spite of every effort of the officers to prevent it, they continued to fire every gun that could be brought to bear upon her, till she dropped more astern and went down, firing her upper-deck guns as she filled.

"It is most certain, that the writer *did not* hear the words "Vive la Nation," shouted from her gangways, fore-castle, and poop, as the Vengeur disappeared; still he must say, that he distinctly heard "Vive la République," shouted out by numberless voices, and no less certain, that no English Jack surmounted the French colours.

(Signed) "A CAPTAIN R. N."

I have treated the writer of this article much better than he deserves; because, if the matter be true, why should he be afraid or ashamed of its being made known? it is only doing justice to a fallen and departed enemy; let the reader compare this statement with the log of the Queen Charlotte, Naval Hist. vol. i. p. 269—"At 4. 50, one of the French prizes sinking in our possession," yet this writer says she went down in action, when by the log it appears the action had ceased full four hours. I am sensible that I shall be blamed by many for noticing this letter at all; but I do it to show that I am not partial, or bigotted to my own version. It is the last of the kind I ever will notice, and I leave it to the surviving relatives of the captains of the Vengeur and the Brunswick, to say whether the sinking of

the French ship was occasioned by the fire of the Royal George, the Ramilies, or the Brunswick—or of all three? If this anonymous writer has not said that which he cannot prove to be true, it is now his duty to come forward and declare himself to the public and to the Editor; I have been often tempted to address the public anonymously; but, on reflection, I am convinced that the practice is wrong, and although, frequently resorted to by men of honour, cannot be defended, especially where historical facts or individual character are concerned. I have, therefore, long since pledged myself, and never will depart from the principle—that I never will—as I never have for the last ten years—address any thing to the public, without putting my name to it. But, in order to show how liable the best of us are to error, let us see what is said by officers who bore a conspicuous share in this same action, in which my anonymous correspondent denies that the *Vengeur* was taken at all.

Collingwood, in his *Letters*, 4th edit. 8vo. p. 22, speaking of the battle of the 1st of June, in which he bore so distinguished a part, and which was so tardily and reluctantly acknowledged, says: “Soon after the admiral was wounded [the late Sir George Bowyer, who lost his leg] they called from the forecastle that the Frenchman was sinking, at which the men started up and gave three cheers. I saw the French ship dismasted, and on her broadside, but in an instant she was clouded with smoke, and I do not know whether she sunk or not. All the French ships in our neighbourhood were dismasted, and are taken, except the French Admiral, who was driven out of the line by Lord Howe, and saved himself by flight. At about twenty minutes past twelve the fire slackened; the French fled, and left us *seven* of their fine ships:—*Sans Pareil*, 84; *Juste*,

84; l'Achille, 74; Northumberland, 74; Amérique, 80; and Le Vengeur, which last sunk *the same evening*."

Let the cool and impartial reader observe here the narrative of an officer commanding one of the British ships *in the action*, writing a letter five days after the event, almost on the very field of battle, not only omitting the name of one of the prizes, the Impétueux, but actually stating that the Vengeur went down in the evening, and not during the action, as the anonymous writer has it. No one ever dare doubt Collingwood's honour and veracity, yet here he *was evidently mistaken*. How, then, shall the historian obtain the truth, when the truth was not known among the most illustrious and credible of the eye-witnesses? Lord Howe states that the Jacobin sunk in the action, and knew nothing of Collingwood's exertions; and I have heard an officer flatly contradict the assertions of that gallant admiral on this very point, and on the proceedings of the Barfleur on the 1st of June.

Lord Howe, in his public letter, says, "In less than an hour after the action commenced in the centre, the French admiral, engaged by the Queen Charlotte, crowded off, and was followed by most of the ships in the van in condition to carry sail after him, leaving with us *about ten or twelve* of his crippled or totally dismasted ships, exclusive of one sunk in the engagement. Seven, however, remained in our possession, one of which sunk before the adequate assistance could be given to her crew, but many, however, were saved."

Here, then, we have the evidence of the commander in chief himself, on the day after the action, when it might be supposed that cool reflection had regained her seat, and that the truth might have been elicited. The admiral certainly, without intention to mislead, asserts that which was not the fact, namely, that a French ship had sunk in

the action—meaning, of course, the Jacobin ; “and seven remained,” says his lordship, “in our possession.” How can this “possession” be reconciled with the assertion of my anonymous correspondent, who denies in substance that the *Vengeur* was ever boarded at all by any British officer, and positively asserts that she went down with her national colours flying, and no British flag displayed on board of her, and while engaged by the *Royal George* ; this is quite sufficient, in order to make out my proposition, that it is morally impossible to obtain information respecting the particulars of a general action at sea, which shall not be contradicted by some party or other with every appearance of plausibility and candour. If Lord Howe, Sir Roger Curtis and Collingwood were deceived ; I may reasonably suppose that I am not better informed, I have heard an officer declare, who was in the action of the 1st of June, that the *Charon* hospital-ship laying to, to windward of the fleet, and out of gun-shot, was mistaken for the *Cæsar*, at that moment actually engaged with the enemy ; and hence the observation in the *Queen Charlotte’s* log, (see 1st edit. *Naval Hist.* vol. i, p. 267) “The *Cæsar’s* main-topsail to the mast, although not within gun-shot of the enemy.” It must be observed that the *Cæsar* and *Charon*, though very different in point of size, were both painted alike with what we used to call “a double side,” and in the confusion and smoke of the action the mistake is by no means an improbable contingency ; and this conjecture is strongly supported on reference to the list of killed and wounded. We shall find that out of twenty-five sail of the line, there were but four who had more men killed and wounded than the *Cæsar* ; one, the *Defence*, nearly the same number ; some none at all ; and of all the nineteen, few compared to the ship whose captain was stigmatized, disgraced, and sent on half-pay,

for not doing his duty ! I was present at Captain Molloy's court-martial, and I well remember Counsellor Fielding putting this pertinent question to the Court—" Who killed and wounded all these men ?"

| | Killed. | Wounded. |
|--------------------|---------|----------|
| Cæsar | 18 | 37 |
| Marlborough..... | 29 | 90 |
| Defence | 18 | 39 |
| Brunswick | 44 | 115 |
| Queen | 36 | 67 |
| Royal George | 20 | 72 |

No. 3.

POOR KNIGHTS OF WINDSOR.

As it is presumed that this work will be read by many naval officers, and as I have ever held the true interests of my profession at heart, and never intentionally pass over any subject which may be useful to its members, particularly to the junior branches of the service, I have given in this volume the Will of Samuel Travers, Esq., whose benevolent heart induced him to mature a comfortable provision for seven lieutenants of the Royal Navy. Would it were as many hundreds ! it would not be too large a portion, out of the thousands who, since the year 1795, when the bequest first came into operation, have faithfully and nobly served their country, and been very inadequately requited for their labour.

The College of the Poor Naval Knights stands on a meadow on the north side of Windsor Castle, from the terrace of which it forms a pleasing object. The College is a low but regular building, consisting of seven houses adjoining each other, with a general dining-hall. The dwellings have two stories besides the basement, and although constructed only for bachelors, are not large enough. A handsome portico runs from one end of the building to the other, with a lawn and flower-garden in front. Between this and the wall of the house, or little park, is a field which has hitherto been held by the Crown on a lease under the Dean and Canons of Windsor ; but the period having expired during the last year, the Chapter are now restoring it to its original purpose, that of a garden and pleasure-ground for themselves and families, which will add greatly to the

beauty and comfort of the College, making the ground mutually ornamental and useful to each other. The field had hitherto, on Sundays, been the resort of idle and noisy young people.

The income of the Knights arising partly from estates in Essex, one of which is subject to inundation, the amount is uncertain; the rest of their revenue consists in funded property left to the College by a brother officer, Lieutenant Robert Brathwaite, of the Royal Navy; which enables them to live very comfortably. His late Majesty, King William the IV., was always kind and attentive to them, invited them to his dinner and evening parties, and entered into conversation with them on their past services and scenes of early life, on which sailors of all ranks are peculiarly apt to dwell with enthusiasm. His Majesty also commanded that they should appear at the Royal Chapel, in their full uniform, on Sundays and all festival days, and in their undress on all other days. All the knights, naval and military, are obliged, by the constitution of their order, to appear in chapel once a day at Divine Service. There are twenty-five military knights, who have apartments in the Castle-yard, but they are not nearly so well provided for as those of the Navy. Upon the whole, this Institution is a very noble one, especially when we consider that it is the work of two benevolent individuals.

As I understand that Mr. Holman, the blind traveller, who is one of the knights, is about to publish a history of the College, I shall content myself with this short notice, but strongly recommending the unmarried lieutenants to look to it.

The Will of the late Samuel Travers, Esq.

I, Samuel Travers, of the parish of St. James's, Westminster, in the county of Middlesex, Esquire, auditor-general to his Royal Highness George Prince of Wales, humbly recommending myself, both in life and death, to the infinite goodness of God, do make my last will and testament as follows :

First, I give and bequeath to my good friend, Walter Cary, Esq., surveyor-general to his said Royal Highness, the sum of four hundred pounds, with my destined lease of castle and demesnes of Tentagail in Cornwall. Item, I give unto my nephew, Samuel Holditch, the sum of four hundred pounds, with all my books and household furniture (except my plate), my chariots and horses, and wearing apparel, he giving thereout to my servant, John Powell, the full value of twenty pounds ; and I make, constitute, and appoint the said Walter Cary and Samuel Holditch, to be full and sole executors of this my will.

Item, I give and bequeath a sufficient sum of money to purchase and erect in St. James' Square, or on Cheapside Conduit, an equestrian statue, in brass, to the glorious memory of my master, King William the Third. Item, I give unto the illustrious young prince, William Augustus, five hundred pounds, towards buying him a George, when he shall be made a knight of the garter.

Item, I give to the Right Hon. the Lady Elizabeth Roberts, five hundred pounds to buy her a jewel. Item, I give to my cousin, Isabella Travers, the sum of three hundred pounds, and to her sister Alice, one hundred pounds. Item, I give to Mr. William Munday, one hundred pounds. And having long and seriously considered how I might do the most service and the most lasting good to mankind, with that wherewith it has pleased God to bless me, I bethought myself of introducing a better way of

educating young men of quality and condition, in the principles of virtue and honour, and in useful learning, in order whereunto I agreed for Beaufort House, at Chelsea, as the prospect and situation for that purpose : but meeting with some discouragements therein, which made me apprehend that this age was not disposed to receive so great a benefit, I leave that blessing to some future and happier season ; and have now hurried my thoughts another way, wherein I hope I may do something good, without encountering difficulties. I therefore, give, grant, devise and bequeath all the rest and residue of my estate (my funeral charges and legacies being first duly paid), my manors, lands, tenements, and hereditaments, in the county of Essex and elsewhere, with all debts, arrears, bills, bonds and other specialities, goods and chattels, with all my estate, real and personal, whatsoever and wheresoever, to my executors, Walter Cary and Samuel Holditch, and their heirs, upon special trust and confidence, that they shall and will, out of the rents and issues and profits of the said estate, settle an annuity or yearly sum of sixty pounds, to be paid to each and every one of seven gentlemen, to be added to the present eighteen Poor Knights of Windsor ; the said annuity to be charged upon an estate of five hundred pounds per annum, to be purchased and set apart for that purpose, in the county of Essex, by my said executors and trustees. And I humbly pray his Majesty, that the said seven gentlemen may be incorporated by charter, with a clause to enable them to purchase or hold lands in mortmain ; and that a building, the charges to be defrayed out of my personal estate, may be erected or purchased in or near the Castle of Windsor, for a habitation for the said seven gentlemen, who are to be superannuated or disabled lieutenants of English men of war ; but the repairs to be in the first place paid out of the said estate of five hundred pounds per annum, and then twelve

pounds per annum to be paid the governor senior of the seven, and the remainder to be equally divided between him and the other six. I desire that those gentlemen so to be incorporated, may be single men without children, inclined to lead a virtuous, studious, and devout life; to be removed if they give occasion for scandal. I would have them live in a collegiate manner, in order whereunto, I would have twenty-six pounds per annum deducted out of their several allowances, to keep a constant table. And I do appoint the chief governor of Windsor Castle, the dean of Windsor, and the provost of Eton to be visitors, with power for them or any two of them to act, as any vacancy shall happen. I desire they may be thus supplied. The Commissioners of the Navy to choose three lieutenants for each vacancy; out of which, the Lord High Admiral, or Commissioners of the Admiralty for the time being, to choose two, and the King's Majesty to nominate one of them; and so from time to time, for ever. I make it my request, to the Earl of Godolphin, the Lord Townsend, Lord Carlton, Mr. Compton, Speaker of the House of Commons, Mr. Walpole, Chancellor of the Exchequer, Lord Chief Justice King, Lord Chief Baron Eyre, Mr. Topham, and Mr. Reeve, to be overseers of this my Will, and take care that the same may be duly executed, according to the true intent and meaning thereof; and my meaning is, that any charges or expenses of my executors or overseers shall be borne out of the estate. I desire to be buried in, or near as may be, to the Free Chapel of St. George's, at Windsor, or where a monument may be erected over me, to the value of five hundred pounds, besides what my executors think proper to be expended on my funeral, for which they shall be indemnified. All the rest of my estate not disposed of as above, I desire to be settled for the maintenance and education of boys at Christ Church Hospital, in the study and practice of mathematics. And I do

hereby revoke all other wills and codicils whatsoever. In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seal, this 16th day of July, one thousand, and seven hundred, and twenty-four. S. TRAVERS.

Signed, sealed, published, and delivered, to be the last will and testament of the said Samuel Travers, in presence of us, who were all together in the same room with the said testator.

Witness our hands :

RD. ROUNDTREE,
JOHN PAUL,
THOMAS HELLER.

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